

ENGLAND'S POLICY IN THE EAST.

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IN

THE EAST.

BY

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ENGLAND'S POLICY IN THE EAST.

I HAVE attempted in these pages to give a brief Introduction. account of the interests of England in the East, and the policy adopted by her in order to defend those interests. I have also ventured, by a calm and unexaggerated statement of facts, based upon much study of the subject, to remove the misapprehensions which have gathered round it, owing to party passion and hasty, though not unnatural, inferences drawn from certain flagrant examples of Turkish misgovernment. Finally, I have endeavoured to sketch out what I conceive to be the policy which should be pursued by England in future.

It is of vital importance, in order that the action of this country abroad should be effective,

The Ministry
and the
Opposition.

that public opinion, in a critical moment like this, should be practically unanimous as to the form which such action should take, and it happens only too often that differences of opinion on foreign questions arise rather from incomplete knowledge than from radical divergences of principle. I do not here allude to the premature judgments which have been expressed by some speakers of the Liberal party on the action of the Government in the present crisis. Such judgments are, in my opinion, only calculated to do mischief to the country, and are in no way compatible with the constitutional functions of Opposition. It is a fundamental axiom of our Constitution that these functions are, in their way, as much an essential part of the Government machine as those of the Ministry and its supporters. Some of the reforms which have so greatly contributed to make the British Constitution what it is have been achieved by the efforts of the Opposition, both in and out of Parliament. The value of such efforts is, of course, finally tested in the parliamentary arena; but the strength and tendency of public opinion have been shown in

numerous cases by overwhelming expressions of it in the country generally, which legitimately conveyed the wishes of the people to that body which is their Constitutional representative. When questions of foreign policy, however, have to be considered, the case is entirely different. It is the right, as it may be the duty, of every member of the Commonwealth, in a free country like ours, to express openly and fearlessly his views on what he conceives should be the policy of the government of the day as regards internal questions affecting the rights and liberties of the people at large. But between such an open expression of opinion on internal questions, and agitations of a nature to mislead foreign States as to the real feeling of the country towards them, there is a vast and most material distinction.

The reason of this is clear. In questions of home politics the views and conduct of the Government, and the general objects to be attained, with the means of attaining them, are patent to all concerned ; whereas in matters affecting the relations of this country with other Powers, none but those whose duty it is to

conduct the negotiations on the subject can possibly be aware either of their scope or their bearings. It is of the very essence of diplomacy that the details of a pending negotiation should not be made public; how then is it possible that the Opposition, which has no part in conducting the negotiation, can criticise and draw inferences from acts of which it can have no knowledge?

As to the conduct of a Government in the past, it is, of course, open to the Opposition to take exception to what has been done, and to urge arguments against a repetition of what they believe to be errors; but they have no right to assume, while negotiations are still pending, and must of necessity be kept secret, that the reluctance of the Ministry to imperil the success of its policy by disclosing it to the public proves that it has no policy at all, or one opposed to the general wishes of the country. Such conduct as this can only be in the highest degree prejudicial to the national interests. There is, however, another fruitful source of divided counsels which proceeds from a want of sufficient

information as to the facts which bear on our political relations with foreign States; and, in attempting to supply such information, I trust to be able to furnish some clear data for forming a judgment as to what should be our future policy in the present crisis.

The first point which it seems necessary to make clear is, what is the Eastern Question, and ^{What is the Eastern Question?} how does it affect the interests of the various European States, and especially of England? The term "Eastern Question" may, in its broadest sense, be taken to mean, is the preservation of the Turkish dominion in Europe possible; and if not, who is to rule in the territories now under the government of the Sultan? But it is usually restricted to the narrower issue of excluding those territories from the grasp of Russia. Much confusion has arisen in the course of recent discussions from the fact that one class of politicians in England have adopted the former of these definitions, while another class have looked to the latter, as representing the view of the question which is at present the only practical one. It must, indeed, be obvious, on a

calm consideration of this matter, that it cannot be the vocation of England, or of any other Power, to undertake the Quixotic task of carrying out an ideal re-organisation of Turkey; the inhabitants of the western shores of the Black Sea have no more claim to have their political condition improved at the expense of Europe than any other population which is dissatisfied with its existing rulers.

What each European power has to consider in this, as in every other case, is its own interest, so far as it may be consistent with the general good of the world. Now, the existence of the Sultan's rule, weak and incapable as it is, does not interfere with the interests of any European power; it is only an obstacle to the aggressive designs of Russia. The practical issue, therefore, is reduced to this: Are the interests of any European Power affected by the ambitious policy pursued by Russia in Turkey?

England's
Interests.

Let us first consider this question so far as it concerns our own country. It is admitted on all hands that it is of vital importance for England to maintain unimperilled her com-

munications with India. While Russia remains on the northern side of the Danube, our communications are tolerably secure; there is the whole of European Turkey and Asia Minor between her and the route to India, and she has no basis of operations in that quarter for her fleet. If, however, her political supremacy were extended to either the Asiatic or the European side of the Dardanelles, she would not only be able to send a fleet to the Suez Canal, but, supposing that it were intercepted by our iron-clads, she could with her army march into Egypt through Syria, and thus both block the canal and possess herself of the nearest route to India through the Euphrates Valley. We could hardly hope to prevent such an operation, against so huge a Power as Russia, by the small military forces at our disposal, even if we had previously adopted the costly and somewhat immoral, if not dangerous, expedient of occupying Egypt; and if we allowed Russia to close up the Black Sea, we should render the great naval force we could otherwise use against her practically harmless.

To put it on the lowest ground:—even if we exclude from consideration the enormous losses of all kinds which we should suffer by the interruption of our communications with India, the establishment of the Russian power in Turkey would in itself be very prejudicial to our trade. It has been very justly pointed out by Mr. Ashworth, the President of the Manchester Chamber of Commerce, that our commercial interests would be greatly damaged by the dominion of Russia being substituted for that of the Sultan, because her commercial policy is restrictive, and is mainly directed against English industries; while Turkey is essentially a free-trade Power, with which England has a much larger commerce than with Russia, our exports to the former country having amounted last year to nearly £13,000,000, while to Russia they were only £3,100,000.

Austria's Interests.

The interests of Austria in the East are no less important and obvious than those of England, and they are in even greater danger from Russian aggression. Out of a total population of about 36,000,000 in Austria-Hungary, 16,000,000

are Slavs. This, however, does not adequately represent the entire area of Slavonic influence in the Empire. The provinces of Galicia, Bohemia, Moravia, the Slovack and Servian districts of Hungary, Carinthia, Carniola, Croatia, and Dalmatia are all inhabited by a population which is predominantly Slavonic, and would necessarily be included, together with the populations of other races in those territories, in any redistribution of political power in Eastern Europe on a Slavonic basis. Such a redistribution would naturally follow, sooner or later, from the establishment of a Slavonic aggressive power like that of Russia in the country between the south-eastern frontier of Austria and the sea. But this, involving the loss to the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy of more than one half of its territory, would inevitably result in the total extinction of Austria as a State.*

*It should not be inferred from the above remarks that the Slavs in Austria *desire* the establishment of a Russo-Slavonic Empire. There is every reason to believe that if Austria declared war against Russia, the Slavonic soldiers in the Austrian army would prove as loyal as those of the other nationalities. But the Slavonic provinces of Austria would

A glance at the map will show that Hungary, closed in on the north and south by its natural enemies, the Slavs, and deprived of the rich province of Transylvania—which, being mainly inhabited by a Roumanian population, would naturally fall to the Russo-Roumanian State of the future—would not be allowed by the Slavs to remain as a wedge dividing their otherwise united territory, and must necessarily share the fate of all small and weak States which stand in the way of a powerful neighbour. There would then only remain the German provinces, and these, finding it impossible to stand alone between two large military States, would be naturally led, both by their interests and proclivities of race and language, to join the great Empire of the Fatherland.

It is, therefore, simply a question of existence for Austria that the dominion of Russia in Eastern Europe should not be allowed to extend beyond its present limits. Even if Russia asked be irresistibly drawn into the orbit of Russia if she became the centre of a new pan-Slavonic power, just as the Italian States gathered round Sardinia, and the German States round Prussia.

for no more than the recovery of the small strip of Bessarabia, extending to the mouth of the Danube, which was taken from her by the Treaty of Paris, a compliance with such a demand would be highly dangerous to Austria, both from a strategical and commercial point of view. It will be remembered that at the beginning of the Servian War great fears were expressed by the Servians lest Belgrade should be attacked by the Turkish gun-boats; and this step would doubtless at once have put an end to the war if the Powers had not prevented Turkey from taking it, on the ground that the Danube is a neutral stream. Such a plea, which was sufficient to deter a weak Power like Turkey, would be certainly disregarded by Russia if she were engaged in a war with Austria. The only obstacle (which, however, only exists in dry seasons, when there is not sufficient water at this point for purposes of navigation) to a Russian flotilla of gun-boats proceeding up the Danube is the rocky defile known as the Iron Gate, between Turno-Severin and Orsova. Several attempts have already been made to remove this obstacle by

mining operations, and there can be no doubt that so serious an impediment to commercial traffic on the Danube will soon be overcome (as in the recent case of Hell-Gate at the entrance of the harbour at New York) by engineering skill. Once this is done, both Pesth and Vienna would be exposed to the danger of a Russian naval attack. Even if we look at the matter only from a commercial point of view, the damage which would accrue to Austrian trade from a Russian possession of the mouths of the Danube is sufficiently obvious. Austria, moreover, as a country largely interested in the commerce of Europe with the East, would share with England in the loss which would be caused by the destruction or closing of the Suez Canal—a loss which would also be more or less severely felt by Germany, France, and Italy.

Interests of
Germany,
France, and
Italy.

These Powers, though not so directly interested in the Eastern Question as England and Austria, would each be likewise affected in other respects by the establishment of Russian power in Turkey. It is universally admitted by the German press that the extensive trade now carried on between

South Germany and the East, would be almost paralysed if the protective duties and vexatious customs regulations which now hamper the importation of foreign goods into Russia were introduced into the Danubian territories. Moreover, the political interests of Germany would be gravely endangered by Russian aggression in Turkey. Her frontier on the side of Russia is about 500 miles long, in a country well provided with railways and other means of communication, and not presenting any natural obstacles to an invader. Strategically speaking, Germany is more open to an attack from Russia than from any other Power; and now that the Czar has proclaimed himself the champion of Pan-slavism, it is impossible for Russia to attain the aims of her policy without coming into direct collision with German interests. For a considerable portion of Germany,* comprising one-third of her sea-board, is Slavonic territory, and is still to a great extent inhabited by a Slavonic population; while the Austrian provinces of

* Posen, West Prussia, East Prussia, and Prussian Silesia, all of which provinces formerly belonged to the kingdom of Poland.

Bohemia and Moravia, which would certainly be claimed by Russia as part of the Slavonic Empire of the future, contain more than half as many Germans as Slavs.

As to France and Italy, their position as Mediterranean Powers necessarily renders it of vital importance to them that Russia, with the fleet of ironclads which she is now building on the Black Sea, should not be mistress of the Dardanelles. If this were the case, their maritime power in the Mediterranean would at any moment be exposed to the danger of a hostile combination between Russia and England; for these Powers --England being in possession of the key of the Mediterranean at Gibraltar, and thereby enabled to isolate the French fleet in that sea,—might easily sweep from it the ships of both France and Italy. Further, if Russia obtained free ingress and egress in the Black Sea, her ports there would become great naval arsenals, and she herself a first-class naval power, with the safest of retreats in case of attack. Even if operating alone, therefore, against France or Italy, she would be a very formidable opponent. France

would see her great commercial ports of Toulon and Marseilles, and her colony of Algiers, threatened by Russian ironclads; and to Italy the danger would be even greater, for the whole of her extensive seaboard is in the Adriatic and the Mediterranean.

It is evident, therefore, that each of the great Powers of Europe has an interest in keeping Russia out of Turkey. "But," say certain politicians of the humanitarian school, "our conduct should not be determined by our interests, but by our duty; we should do what is right, no matter what harm to ourselves may come of it." Mr. Freeman, whose great literary gifts only bring into stronger prominence his want of political judgment, has devoted many columns of effusive declamation in his favourite newspaper to the development of this self-evident proposition, which is about as much to the point as the maxim: "Cease to do evil, learn to do well," or any other copy-book text that nobody has ever dreamt of contesting.

The Eastern Question from a philanthropic point of view.

We are all agreed that we should do right; but

What is right?

what is right? Lord Beaconsfield and Mr. Gladstone, the Pope and Dr. Cumming, the Czar and the Sultan, all unquestionably endeavour to do what they conceive to be right. It is not the end, but the means, as to which they differ; and it would be as monstrous to accuse them of knowingly and deliberately striving to do what is wrong, as it would be to accuse Mr. Freeman of wishing to set the world in flames in order that a Russian despot should rule over the Bulgarians rather than an apathetic and incapable Turk. Yet this is what, however involuntarily, his schemes for a regeneration of the East amount to. He would risk a war which would deluge all Europe with blood, and cause incalculable misery to future generations, in order that some six millions of Bosnians and Bulgarians may have the questionable advantage of trying to rule themselves, with the certainty, in the very probable event of their failing to do so, of falling under the iron rule of Russia. Such (as will appear in the sequel) is Mr. Freeman's way of "doing right;" it is not Lord Derby's way, nor, as may be safely asserted, is it the way that

Mr. Freeman's way
of "doing
right."

would be approved by the great majority of Englishmen.

Messrs. Gladstone, Lowe, and Stansfeld, who may be ranked together as the disciples of Mr. Freeman, but whose views, fortunately for the political reputation of the Liberal party, are not shared by its responsible and sober-minded leaders, such as Lord Hartington and Mr. Forster, hold that the only possible remedy for the grievances of the Turkish Christians is to be found in the extermination of the Turks, "bag and baggage," from Europe, much in the same way as the process of "stamping out" was prescribed as the last resource for checking and eradicating the cattle plague. This is simply to advocate one kind of atrocity as a means of preventing the repetition of another. A crusade with Christianity and civilisation as its war-cry, would bring in its train at least as much suffering to the Turks as has been endured by the Eastern Christians, besides which it would inevitably lead to terrible reprisals in all countries where Mahometans and Christians live side by side. Mr. Gladstone might perhaps think that such a

The "bag and baggage" policy.

result, so far as it would only affect "the anti-human species of humanity," is not to be deprecated; but even granting that philanthropy is not to be extended to Turks, it would surely be not only most unreasonable and impolitic, but inhuman, to expose the Turkish Christians to a fate far worse than the present one, even leaving out of the question the contingency of a massacre of our own countrymen in India, arising, like the mutiny of 1857, from a religious motive.

Since the publication of his pamphlet on "The Bulgarian Horrors," in which the above proposal, as it was understood at the time by the principal London newspapers which commented upon it, was made, Mr. Gladstone has attempted to explain that what he meant was, not that the whole Turkish population should be expelled, but only the Turkish officials, civil and military. But this proposal really involves the other; for if the Turks were left at the mercy of a hostile race which for the first time was allowed to taste the intoxication of power, their position would become so intolerable that they would be obliged

to leave the country. On this point it will be instructive to quote the testimony of a well-informed correspondent in the *Times*, of Nov. 9, who says : "I can hardly conceive anything more ridiculous than the attempt to inflict representative institutions on the masses of the Christian provinces. To do so will be simply to throw the whole administration of the different States into the hands of unprincipled adventurers who will, in the pursuit of their exclusive and personal interests, alternately, and as it suits their purpose, truckle to the Porte and to the ecclesiastical authorities, and use the unfortunate natives simply as tools and steps by which to rise to wealth and power It is individual responsibility which requires development in Turkey, not fantastical theories of so-called 'self-government.' Once give to this responsibility a practical reality, and the faith or race of the individuals to whom is intrusted the task of government is immaterial. For my own part, I would rather see a Turk as a Governor than a Perote Christian. I think he could be better

trusted, and that his instincts, as well as his capabilities, are of a higher class."

Proposal of
an English
alliance with
Russia.

So much for the plan of ameliorating the condition of the Christians by improving the Turks off the face of the earth. But there is another aspect of the policy of the philanthropists which has been urged by Messrs. Freeman, Gladstone, and Bright. These gentlemen plead for an English alliance with Russia, on the ground that she alone of all the Great Powers, actuated solely by humanitarian principles, has espoused the cause of the Turkish Christians. What was her real object in doing this is a point which will be considered later. But it is strange indeed that politicians who profess to be solely guided by principles of humanity should select Russia as their ally in promoting such a policy,—Russia, whose whole history is replete with proofs of her utter disregard for such precepts. There is no intention here of holding up the Russians, as Mr. Gladstone has the Turks, to public reprobation as "anti-human specimens of humanity;" there are few, if any, nations whose history has not been stained by acts which are

shocking to philanthropic sentiment. But it is of essential importance, in considering whether we should invoke the assistance of a foreign Power for a philanthropic object, that we should know whether its past and present conduct is of a nature to promote or to defeat that object. In the ordinary affairs of life we should scarcely entrust the property of the widow and orphan to any one whose antecedents would not bear the strictest investigation. Now, what are the antecedents of Russia ?

The first point to be investigated before we can safely call upon Russia to aid us in a humane undertaking is, whether Russia is herself a humane power. On this point the evidence is overwhelming. The story of the massacre of the Yomud Turkomans, as told by Mr. Schuyler, the historian of the Bulgarian massacres, has horrified all Europe, but as its significance in proof of the inhumanity of the Russian Government has been disputed, we will here briefly repeat it.

General Kaufmann, after the taking of Khiva, ordered the tribe of the Yomuds to pay a contribution within a period of fifteen days. This,

says Mr. Schuyler, was a mere pretext; the general's object was not to get money, but to exterminate the tribe. By a written order to General Golovatchef, he directed the Russian forces to march and attack the Turkomans without even waiting for the fifteen days to expire. The order was :

“If your Excellency sees that the Yomuds are not occupying themselves with getting together money, but are assembling for the purpose of opposing our troops, or perhaps even of leaving the country, I order you immediately to move upon the settlements of the Yomuds which are placed along the Hazavat canal and its branches, and to *give over the settlements of the Yomuds and their families to complete destruction, and their herds and property to confiscation.*” (The italics are Mr. Schuyler's.)

In consequence of this order General Golovatchef, as reported by Mr. Schuyler, addressed his officers as follows :

“‘I have received an order from the Comman-

der-in-Chief—I hope you will remember it and give it to your soldiers. This expedition does not spare either sex or age. Kill all of them.’ After this the officers delivered this command to their several detachments. The detachment of the Caucasus army had not then arrived, but came that evening. Golovatchef called together the officers of the Caucasus and said: ‘I hope you will fulfil all these commands strictly in the Circassian style, without a question. You are not to spare either sex or age. Kill all of them.’”

And this is the way (according to the report of an eye-witness, taken down by Mr. Schuyler “from his own lips”) that the order was carried out:

“Nearly every one whom we met was killed. The Cossacks seemed to get quite furious, and rushed on them with their sabres, cutting everybody down, whether a small child or an old man. I saw several such cases. I remember one case in particular, which I could not look at for more than a moment, and rode hastily by. A mother,

who had been riding on horseback with three children, was lying dead. The eldest child was dead also. The youngest had a sabre cut through its arm, and while crying was wiping off the blood. The other child, a little older, who was trying to wake up the dead mother, said to me '*Tiura*'—stop. The Turkomans were much enraged at these things, and cut one Cossack into pieces before our eyes."

Another independent witness, Captain Burnaby, in his very able and interesting work, '*A Ride to Khiva*,' says, referring to General Kaufmann's dealings with the Yomuds, "Men, women, and children at the breast were slain with ruthless barbarity; houses with bedridden inmates were given to the fiery element; women—ay, and prattling babes—were burned alive amidst the flames. Hell was let loose in Turkistan." Mr. Gladstone, in his well-known article in the *Contemporary Review* on the Russians in Turkistan, endeavours to palliate these atrocities by urging that they constitute an isolated case. "The Russian troops," he says, "were kept under the severest discipline by their commanders,

and their conduct in general was most exemplary.' But surely the very fact that the Russian troops only committed cruelties when they were ordered to do so makes the policy which directed such cruelties only the more atrocious. The orders of the Russian commanders were regulated not by humanitarian principles, but by what they supposed to be the interests of Russian policy ; the natives were conciliated or butchered as it was deemed expedient.

The difference between the conduct of the organised troops of Russia in Turkistan and that of the Bashi-bazouks and Circassians in Bulgaria is simply that between a deliberate crime committed in cold blood and the ferocious acts of an undisciplined horde of fanatical savages. We will not ask here which is the anti-human species of humanity ? We know that the Russians, as a nation, do not yield to any in humane and philanthropic feelings, and such acts as that above recorded were whispered about with horror and reprobation at St. Petersburg long before they became known to the rest of Europe. The question is, not whether the Russians are

Difference between the conduct of Russia in Turkistan and that of Turkey in Bulgaria.

humane as a nation, but whether their system of government is not such as to render it impossible to trust them as allies in any undertaking for the purpose of preventing inhumanity in others.

Next, it would be a great mistake to view the cruelties committed in Turkistan as a solitary instance of Russian oppression. In Poland, in the Baltic provinces, in Circassia—everywhere, in fact, where Russia is ruling over alien races—we find the same system pursued with relentless pertinacity. The Poles are not at this moment in revolution, and there is, therefore, no occasion for the perpetration of such horrible deeds as those committed in Turkistan last year. But the following extracts will show how the Poles were treated at the time of their last insurrection. If we substitute Bulgarians for Poles, and Bashi-bazouks for regular Russian troops, we shall find in the acts of Russia in 1863 a striking prototype of those of Turkey in 1876. The quotations are taken from the *Times* of 1863, where numerous other details of Russian “atrocities” will be found by those who care to look for them :

Russian rule
in Poland.

“*Times*, February 21, 1863.—‘They put unarmed men, women, and children to the sword. . . . They put the peaceful inhabitants of the town to the sword after they had routed the insurgents. . . . The Russians do not allow the Poles to bury their slain, as the Grand Duke Constantine has declared that they shall be food for ravens.’

“April 23.—‘A magistrate named Swiderski thus described what he himself witnessed: “The Imperial troops attacked the house with a hail-storm of shots; I, a quiet inhabitant, being in the house at the time. At length the soldiers entered, killed my daughter with two bayonet stabs, wounded with two shots my son-in-law . . . and began to plunder. . . . The Imperial troops, after killing four insurgents, whom we buried, murdering my daughter, and wounding my son-in-law, killed six servants of the household [their names are given]. The above were first castrated and then twice stabbed with bayonets.”’ [Other outrages are mentioned at the same time.]

“June 24.—‘After the battle of Lubar, the

Adjutant-General Kolsakoff gave orders that the prisoners and the wounded should be buried in the same grave with the dead, and the Russian soldiers readily obeyed the instructions they had received.'

"November 11.—'Young ladies are being continually arrested. Fifty, for the most part girls of from seventeen to nineteen years of age, some of them even younger, were taken one night last week, and are now in prison. Old and young, men and women are all treated alike in the matter of arrests, and are invariably seized in the middle of the night. *From ten at night till four the next morning are the Russian official hours for deeds that will not bear the light of day.*'"

The above quotations will, it is hoped, suffice to prove that the policy of Russia as a State is the very reverse of a humane one. Even if this were not the case, however, the system of government which she pursues in her own country is such that no true friend of the Turkish Christians can wish that they should be subjected to a similar rule. However disinterested Russia may be assumed to be in her efforts to emancipate

the Southern Slavs from the Ottoman dominion, it cannot be supposed that she would tolerate the grant of more liberal institutions to them than she herself possesses; a free State is a dangerous neighbour to a despotic one, which must always dread the incitement to revolution among its own people produced by the proximity of a nation enjoying greater political liberties than themselves.

If, therefore, the Turkish Christians are to be emancipated with the help of Russia, that power may fairly claim, if not to exercise a direct influence over their system of government, at least to prevent it from becoming more liberal than her own. And what is the Russian system of government? That it is a despotism we all know; and this—though it would be intolerable to Englishmen—would, perhaps, not be regarded as a grievance by the half-civilised populations of the East. But even they would probably protest against the incessant and vexatious interference of Russian officialism in all the affairs of life; the rigid suppression of all manifestations of public opinion which are at variance with the views of the government; the prohibition of the use of their

Probable consequences to the Turkish Christians of Russian intervention in their behalf.

own language in public documents and courts of justice ; and the almost unlimited arbitrary power of the higher functionaries, who have the lives and properties of the people at their mercy.

It will be interesting to quote on this subject the *Pall Mall Gazette* of the 21st of February, 1876 :

“ Another complaint made against the Turkish Government is that there is no security for the property of its Christian subjects. But in Russia the Government has not only failed to afford securities for the property of its Polish subjects, but has carried out a system of wholesale confiscation which is without a precedent in any modern Christian State. Moreover, in Lithuania, Volhynia, and Podolia no Pole or Roman Catholic is permitted to acquire land except by direct inheritance. If he becomes insolvent his landed property is sold by auction ; and, as none but Russians can be buyers, and those residing in the provinces in question are usually few in number and poor, the sum realized by the sale

is usually so small that both the debtor and his creditors are ruined. Nor is this the only cause of the depreciation of property in the Polish districts. During the last twelve years a special tax has been imposed on the Poles and Catholics, from which their fellow subjects of the Russian nationality and creed are entirely exempt. In addition to these material grievances, there are moral, or, so to say, national ones in Russia which do not exist among the Turkish Slavs. There are from 5,000,000 to 6,000,000 persons under the Russian rule whose native tongue is Polish. Of these, four-fifths at least do not speak any other language; yet in the Polish provinces the only language used in all the public offices, courts of justice, etc., is the Russian. In Lithuania, Volhynia, and Podolia it is forbidden, under legal penalties, to place Polish inscriptions on the shops, to make out tradesmen's bills in Polish, to address letters in Polish, and even to speak that language in public places. It is, of course, found impossible strictly to enforce the latter prohibition; but the decree on this subject (General Potapoff's circular of the 22nd of March and

9th of July, 1868) still has the force of law, and even now placards may be seen in various parts of Vilna with the inscription, 'It is forbidden to speak Polish here.' As to the absence of personal security for the Christians in Turkey, the recent banishment of M. Brodzki, banker and municipal councillor at Odessa, shows that in Russia people are not better off. This incident has made some noise, owing to the fact that M. Brodzki is a Jew, and that his cause has consequently been taken up by the numerous journalists of his persuasion who occupy influential positions in the press of Berlin and Vienna; but there are hundreds of Poles who have been similarly treated, and any Russian subject is liable to be banished without trial by an order from the chief of the police at St. Petersburg."

Is Russia
more tolerant
than Tur-
key?

The greatest grievance, however, of those of the Turkish Christians who do not belong to the orthodox Russian church, would, if they were placed under a system of government similar to that existing in Russia, be that of religious persecution. It is a favourite argument with

humanitarian politicians that Christianity cannot exist by the side of Islamism, and that it would therefore be better for Russia than for the Sultan to rule in the provinces inhabited by Christians. But let us look at the facts. Is Russia more tolerant towards alien religions than Turkey? To this question no better answer can be given than the evidence of the Rev. Cyrus Hamlin, who has long resided in Turkey as an American missionary. In a lecture delivered at Boston in October, 1876,* he says :

“Turkish officials are generally kind-hearted Turkish tolerance.
men. . . . *All the persecution which Protestant missions have suffered in Turkey originated in the Christian priests, communities, and churches opposed to the Protestants. . . .* The Turks are naturally a tolerant people. It is specially provided in the Koran that any ‘religion with a book’—that is, any religion which draws its authority from inspired writing—shall be tolerated; and under this provision the various Christian sects and the Jews find protection. . . . There is this difference

* *Boston Journal.*

between Russia and Turkey, that in Turkey all the various Christian sects, as well as the Mahometans, are at liberty to manage their own churches and schools, and to carry on proselytism; but in Russia no Russian, under pain of heavy penalty, is permitted to leave the State church, and not even a Pagan or Mahometan Tartar is allowed to be converted to any thing but the State church. The Turks are very bloody and savage in war, but are tolerant in peace. It would be decidedly better for the people and for the cause of Christianity to have the Turks remain in Europe than to have Russia hold Constantinople."

Another gentleman, who the *Pall Mall Gazette* * asserts "is entitled to speak for the whole body of American missionaries in Turkey," informs that paper that "the missionaries have such a dread of Russian ascendancy" that they requested him "to lay before the German Government certain proofs of Russian intolerance, and to solicit that Government to secure from Russia guarantees for religious liberty before

* October 21st, 1876.

consenting to the dismemberment of Turkey, or to the occupation of Turkish soil by a Russian army." The American missionaries, he says, are all known to him personally as men of candour and discretion, "and their long residence in Turkey and familiarity with the Government and peoples of the Empire entitles their opinion touching its internal affairs to most serious consideration." They are all of opinion "that Russian influence is the most wily and deadly foe of themselves and their work." "We have been indebted," they declare, "mainly to Russian influences for the persecutions that have attended our labours for the last forty years."

The president of a college in Turkey testifies:—

"We have no special cases of persecution to allege. There is a vast amount of small persecution against Protestants. They are sometimes excluded from representation in the local councils; sometimes their colporteurs are arrested, their books are forbidden, permits to erect buildings are withheld, and many similar things which,

all put together, make their condition exceptionally uncomfortable, and constitute a repressive force to which others are not subjected. Russia never appears in this at all. She is much too wise and crafty for that. She openly and officially promises the very things she is resolved to destroy. Her agents, known and secret, are innumerable. They cover the empire. They accomplish their work through Turkish agents, without ever making themselves responsible."

And the *Pall Mall* correspondent concludes his letter with the following pregnant remarks :—

" On the assumption that England had abandoned Turkey to her fate, I was, as I have said, requested to make an appeal to the German Government. This was several months ago. Since then the vigorous and at the same time judicious action of Lord Derby has changed the aspect of the case, and restored the British Government to its true position in Continental affairs. The uprising of the people of England against the barbarities of the

Turks is most honourable to their humanity ; but I marvel that in suggesting a remedy they should be willing to take the risk of the extinction of religious liberty and of Christian progress under the intolerant sway of Russia. Much that is attributed to the nature of the Turk is due to that false system which makes the head of the State the head also of a religion ; which subjects the State in all its functions to the control of a religion that claims to be infallible ; and would use the State for the defence and propagation of this religion as its supreme duty. We need not go back very far in the history of Europe to find outrages that parallel those of Bulgaria, perpetrated in the name of Christianity, under this same delusion. Now, I would give emphasis to the fact that *the American missionaries in Turkey, who know both the Turks and the Russians, agree in preferring the rule of Turkey to the rule of Russia for the safety of all that is dear in our reformed Christianity.* What they charge upon Russia is not a vague suspicion, not the conjecture of an individual of hasty or jealous temperament, not a gene-

ralization from some passing incident, but the result of more than thirty years' experience by men who have exceptional facilities for knowing the people and for tracing out the sources of action. These men with one accord lift up their hands to the Christian Powers of Europe and say: Take Turkey in hand, compel her to be just, rule her, and, if need be, dismember her; but in no event suffer Russia to come in and rule her and us. That is an appeal that the Christian people of England ought to hear, to ponder, and to heed. This marks the direction in which Christian sympathy should move. One missionary says, 'The coming in of Russia would be like a return of the glacial epoch.' "

Russian
tolerance.

If Russia can act in the way above described against the members of other religions than her own in provinces which are under the direct rule of a foreign Government, how great would be the religious persecution in those provinces if the power of that Government were withdrawn and Russian influence became predominant in them! Nor should it be supposed that Pro-

testants only are the objects of Russian persecution. In Poland* the Roman Catholic dioceses have been arbitrarily suppressed, the ecclesiastical property has been confiscated, numberless Roman Catholic churches have been closed, curates have been expelled from their parishes, and an archbishop (Felinski) and a bishop (Krasinski) have been banished to Siberia.

The members of another religion, the United Greek Church, have been even more mercilessly persecuted. Whole villages in the diocese of Chelm have been "converted" to the Russian Church by the simple process of marching a body of troops into the streets, who, after turning the clergy out of the churches and installing Russian popes in their stead, crushed all resistance by shooting down the peasants who opposed these measures.†

* *Pall Mall Gazette*, February 21st, 1876.

† The massacres in the diocese of Chelm took place in January, 1874. Troops were sent into each village, and the commanding officers, accompanied by Russian popes, having assembled the peasantry, called upon them to sign a declaration stating their willingness to accept the Russian rite.

Treatment of
the Jews in
Russia.

Another illustration of the intolerance of the Russian Government is afforded in its treatment of the Jews. The number of Jews in the Empire is 3,000,000, and they are only allowed to reside in certain provinces of European Russia. This restriction, enforced by the tyranny of exclusive laws, is carried out by individuals whose whole subsistence, based mainly on a system of wholesale bribery, depends on the maintenance of those laws, and is an inexhaustible source of moral and social misery to the Jewish population. Further, concessions relative to the change of domicile (such as permission to reside in St.

In the villages where the peasants refused to do this the soldiery were ordered to beat the men and women with the butt-ends of their muskets, and, if they still continued refractory, to fire upon them. At Polubice six peasants were either beaten to death or mortally wounded; at Drelow five were killed, twenty-eight severely wounded, and all the villagers were beaten with sticks, each of the men receiving fifty blows, each woman twenty, and each child ten. At Pratulin the troops fired on the peasantry while they were singing hymns in the market-place. Twelve peasants were killed, and the dead bodies were exposed by the Russians for a whole day in the church, the inhabitants of the neighbouring villages being invited by the Russian officials to see how the Government punishes disobedience to the will of the Czar.

Petersburg) are only granted to Jewish merchants who pay the highest tax imposed on commercial licences; they are not conferred on small traders. Hence the crowding together of small traders within narrow limits, which renders poverty a permanent evil. Finally, the Jews are precluded by law from becoming proprietors of land.

The above facts will probably afford a sufficient answer to the question whether the Turkish Slavs would be better off under a Russian system of Government than under that of the Porte. They would have to bribe the Russian officials just as they do the Turkish pashas; they would exchange total exemption from military service for universal obligation to military service; the Roman Catholics and Jews would find the merciless persecution of the orthodox Russian substituted for the contemptuous toleration of the Turk; and the trading classes, which are now flourishing and prosperous under the *dolce far niente* Government of Constantinople, would be hampered at every step by the vexatious officialism of St. Petersburg.

It is not intended by the above remarks to "Autonomy."

attempt any defence of the Turkish rule. Nobody denies Turkish misgovernment; but the way to remedy it is not to replace it by Russian oppression. A favourite scheme of our political theorists is the establishment of tributary States, like Servia and Roumania, in Bosnia and Bulgaria. Now, "two-fifths of the population of Bosnia, and a quarter at least, if not nearly a third of the population of Bulgaria," is, according to Mr. Forster, Mahometan; and, as he very justly remarks, "merely to give them self-government and then to leave them, would be to leave them in a state of hopeless anarchy." And what is the result of anarchy in a country which is the neighbour of Russia, we all know from the history of Poland.

Moreover, it is quite evident that the formation of more autonomous vassal States in Turkey could not be carried out except as the result of a Russo-Turkish war. Now Russia, however disinterested her motives might be in entering upon such a war, would certainly not waste her blood and money without some equivalent. Such an equivalent could only consist either in the direct annexation of a piece of Turkish territory, or, which

is, perhaps, more probable, in the conclusion of an offensive and defensive alliance with the Turkish vassal States which would place their military forces at Russia's disposal, as those of the South German States were placed at the disposal of Prussia by the secret treaty of 1866.

In a word, "a chain of autonomous states" would not, as has been asserted, be a barrier against Russian aggression, but a bridge for the troops of Russia from her frontier to Constantinople, as has been already shown during the last few weeks by the example of Servia and Roumania.* What is really wanted is a reformed administration which should strengthen the Turkish Government until the Christian populations are able (of

* According to the Russian General Fadéeff (*Opinion on the Eastern Question*) the autonomy of the Slav provinces of Turkey "would give independence in internal affairs, a separate ruler, and separate political institutions. *But independence from an international and military point of view is quite a different question.* . . . The liberated East of Europe, if it be liberated at all, will require a durable bond of union and a common head, with a common council, the transaction of international affairs, and the military command, in the hands of that head—the *Czar of Russia, the natural chief of all the Slavs and members of the orthodox Church.*"

which there is as yet but little sign) to walk alone ; *i.e.*, as long as there is no danger of their exchanging the almost nominal, and practically harmless, supremacy of the Sultan for the formidable leadership of the Czar.

The scheme of political autonomy as a solution of the Eastern Question must therefore be dismissed as impracticable. There only remains the alternative above referred to of administrative autonomy, as proposed by Lord Derby and apparently agreed to by Russia.* This, it is obvious, is a very different thing from the "bag and baggage" policy of Messrs. Gladstone and Lowe ; and as those statesmen have said a great deal about the obligations which we have incurred towards the Turkish Christians in consequence of the Crimean war, it may be well here to inquire what were the objects of that war, and how far they were attained.

What was
the Crimean
War fought
for ?

It is a curious fallacy among some of our politicians that we fought the Russians in the Crimea because we did not like them so well as the Turks.

* Despatch to Sir A. Loftus of the 30th of June, 1876.
(See Appendix.)

That there was at that time a certain amount of sympathy for Turkey in this country is undeniable; but we no more fought for the Turks out of mere sympathy for them than we remained neutral, in the wars of 1859 and 1864, because we had no sympathy for the Italians and the Danes. We are notoriously enthusiastic in our sympathies for nations which we conceive to be ill-treated, but we do not go to war for them unless such a course is prescribed by our honour or our interests. Let us see what Lord Palmerston* describes as the reasons for our having entered upon the Crimean war. "The five great Powers have, in a formal document, recorded their opinion that it is for the *general interest of Europe* that the integrity and independence of the Ottoman Empire should be maintained; and it would be easy to show that *strong reasons, political and commercial*, make it *especially the interest of England* that this integrity and independence should be maintained. . . . *We support Turkey for our own sake and for our own interests*; and to withdraw our support, or to

* Life of Lord Palmerston. By the Hon. Evelyn Ashley, M.P.: Bentley, 1876.

cripple it, so as to render it ineffectual, merely because the Turkish Government did not show as much deference to our advice as our advice deserved, *would be to place our national interests at the mercy of other persons. If Lord Liverpool's Government had so acted in regard to the Provisional Government of Spain, we never should have driven the French out of the Peninsula.**

Mr Lowe's
illustration
of "the dog."

Another fallacy, which was started by Mr. Lowe, and has since been repeated, parrot-fashion, by various speakers at public meetings, is that we took over from Russia the protectorate of the Christians of Turkey, and that we are therefore bound to provide them with a proper Government. Now, in the first place, Russia was not the protector of the Turkish Christians; it was her demand to be recognised as such which led, among other reasons, to the Crimean war. We could not have taken up a protectorate which never existed; and even if we had wished to inaugurate a policy

* How much better would it have been for the country if Mr. Gladstone and his friends had acted in the spirit of these wise remarks, instead of urging England to withdraw her support from Turkey because atrocities were committed in Bulgaria!

of protection for the Christian subjects of the Sultan, we were precluded from such a course by the ninth article of the Treaty of Paris, which says that "the Powers are not in any case to have the right of interfering, either separately or collectively, in the relations of his Majesty the Sultan with his subjects, nor in the internal administration of his Empire." In developing his singular theory, which, as is shown above, has no foundation whatever in fact, Mr. Lowe used an illustration which has enjoyed some popularity. "Suppose," he said, "that I, being afraid of my house being robbed, keep a fierce dog which flies at everybody who comes near, and tries to tear them to pieces. The law of the country is founded on this: if I am not aware that the dog is a fierce dog, I shall not be answerable for his acts; but I am answerable if I have the power and means of restraining him. My responsibility, I say, then, would depend upon two things—first, upon my knowledge of the qualities of the beast; and secondly, on my power to restrain the beast. Now what I wish to point out is, that we have had for any period of years you like to mention a thorough

knowledge of the qualities of the Turk; and we have had in our hands, if we had chosen to use it, perfect power to restrain the animal from acting according to his odious and detestable nature." This is a very telling way of putting the case, but it happens to be entirely inconsistent with the facts. In what sense can it be said that Turkey is in our keeping? Her position in the public law of Europe is defined by the Treaty of Paris, which (Article 7) declares the Ottoman Empire to be an independent State, and places its independence and integrity under the guarantee of all the European Powers. Next, as to our being "aware that the dog is a fierce dog." It may be true that we have for many years had "a thorough knowledge of the qualities of the Turk;" but that knowledge certainly did not show us that Turkey is an aggressively savage Power, in any way like "a fierce dog which flies at everybody who comes near and tries to tear them to pieces." This would be an admirable description of a Power which, ever since it has been an Empire, has pursued an incessant career of aggression and conquest, but it certainly cannot apply to a declining State whose efforts have during the

last two centuries been almost exclusively directed to the defence of its own possessions. If Mr. Lowe's meaning is that Turkey treats its subjects like a fierce dog, the simile would apply to most despotic States; and his moral would point to our becoming the champion of all distressed nationalities—a policy of which, however chivalrous and philanthropic, Mr. Lowe can hardly be supposed, even by the wildest stretch of imagination, to be the advocate. Finally, as to our “power to restrain the animal”—unless Mr. Lowe means by the term “power,” *le droit du plus fort*—it has already been shown that the ninth Article of the Treaty of Paris deprives us of the right of exercising such power.

The Crimean war was fought, not for the purpose of assisting the Sultan to oppress his Christian subjects, nor for that of defending them against him, but simply in order to protect our interests in the East against the aggression of Russia. That object, it must be confessed, was but imperfectly attained. We certainly shut out Russia from the Danube by depriving her of a por-

Were the results aimed at by the Crimean war attained?

tion of Bessarabia;* but the articles of the Treaty of Paris forbidding Russia to keep ships of war in the Black Sea, which were at the time regarded as the most effectual protection against Russian ambition, have ceased to exist. The high-handed way in which Russia repudiated these provisions in 1870 was deservedly condemned by the united voice of Europe, yet it must be admitted that a first-class Power could not be expected to submit for an indefinite period to so humiliating a restriction of its natural development. The truth is that although Russia was beaten in the field, no sufficient precautions were taken to prevent the recurrence of such a state of things as made it necessary for us to make war upon her in 1853. Her military power, which was then almost crushed, is now far greater than it was at the time of the Crimean war; her communications with South-Eastern Europe are enormously improved, and she has successfully employed the interval during which she has been reorganising her political and military system, in securing a most powerful and extensive influence over the Slavonic subjects of the Porte.

* See the Treaty of Paris, Art. 20 (Appendix).

The fruits of the Crimean war are, it may be said, as good as lost; not because it was a mistake to enter upon that war, but because we did not push our victories to a more practical conclusion.

It may be well at this point to consider the allegation of the Slavophiles in this country that the conduct of Russia towards Turkey has been actuated solely by motives of humanity, and by the community of race and religion between herself and the Turkish Slavs. What has been the conduct of Russia throughout these Eastern troubles? It is a notorious fact that for years before the Herzegovinian insurrection broke out, there have been Russian committees, both in Russia proper and in Bucharest, which have been engaged in fomenting revolutionary outbreaks among the Christian populations of the provinces of Turkey; Russian agents were incessantly at work in those provinces, and though it may not have suited the policy of the Government of St. Petersburg to produce a general rising, their efforts brought about partial insurrections, keeping up a smouldering flame of hostility between Turks and Christians that only required the stronger breath of official Russian

Origin and progress of the present disturbances in the East.

interference to fan it into a vast conflagration. That these risings were not the result of Turkish oppression, is shown by the fact that the Christian populations of Epirus, Macedonia, and Thessaly, who were treated in precisely the same manner by their Turkish rulers as those of Bulgaria and Herzegovina, have remained perfectly quiet since the Crimean war. The insurrection in Bulgaria which was the cause of the "atrocities" of which we have heard so much, was preceded by numberless other Bulgarian risings; these, however, were suppressed with comparatively little bloodshed, simply because the rest of the Turkish Empire was then at peace, and the fanaticism of the Mahometan population had, as yet, not been artificially aroused. But the bankruptcy of Turkey, and the imbecility of her ruler, evidently seemed to the astute Muscovite statesmen to afford a propitious opportunity of precipitating the dissolution of the Empire. Servia and Montenegro were encouraged to make war upon their Suzerain; Russian agents swarmed in Bulgaria, Bosnia, and Herzegovina, and Russian officers and soldiers, though remaining in the

service of their Government, were allowed to join the Christian armies against the Porte. It is impossible to deny, in the face of these facts, that the conflict now waged in Turkey is not the result of a spontaneous national or religious movement, but is simply due to the action of Russia, working for her own ends upon the natural antagonism between Christian and Turk.* Such being the case, it is evident that any political sympathy with the opponents of the Porte is misplaced, and that the cry about the Bulgarian atrocities, which for a time was so popular among a certain class of

* Writing on this subject, a Russian radical paper, the *Nabat*, of Geneva, says: "A government steeped in the blood of the Poles dares to speak of Slavonic fraternity; the very men who have exterminated language and nationality in Poland, Little Russia, and the Caucasus, now come to us with the doctrine of nationality on their lips. . . . Those who have shot down and tortured the Polish Catholics, merely because they wished to pray in the same fashion as their forefathers had prayed before them, who had desecrated and shut up churches, now speak of the Christian religion as endangered by Mussulman fanaticism. More colossal hypocrisy than this cannot be imagined. . . . For years past the Russian Government has been carrying on an agitation in Bulgaria, Bosnia, and Herzegovina; Russian spies have been distributing Russian gold, with which they stimulated the unfortunate Slavs to insurrection."

pseudo-political religious enthusiasts in this country, has simply played into the hands of Russia.

Why Russia
wants Con-
stantinople.

Why should we go out of our way to ascribe the underhand machinations above set forth to humanitarian influences, when the lessons of history and the present wants of the Russian nation clearly point to their true cause? The removal by Peter the Great of the Russian capital from Moscow to the vicinity of the sea at St. Petersburg showed the importance which Russia attaches to a sea-board; and her history ever since has recorded her incessant efforts to develop her naval power on the south. As has been well observed by a writer in the *Manchester Guardian*, Russia is now in possession of the whole coast of the Black Sea from the south of the Caucasus to the neighbourhood of the Danube; some of her largest rivers fall into that sea, and her most flourishing commercial ports, with the second of her naval arsenals, are on its shores. The Black Sea, in a word, is the natural maritime outlet for one-half of the European territories of Russia. But the road from the Black Sea to the Mediterranean,

the East, or the Atlantic, lies through the Bosphorus and the Dardanelles, which are commanded by Constantinople. It is obviously the interest of Russia, therefore, that the Turkish capital, which is the key of the Black Sea, should be in her hands. But this is not all. The possession of such a country as Turkey, with unrivalled and still undeveloped resources, would give an extraordinary impetus to Russian industry and commerce; it would enrich her middle classes, extend her territory, multiply her population and her military forces, add to her revenue, and secure for her policy a most powerful influence on the affairs of Europe, by enabling her to become a first-class naval Power.

It is no disgrace to Russia, under these circumstances, that she should aspire to the possession of Constantinople. If, frankly abandoning the petty subterfuge of a humanitarian crusade on behalf of the Turkish Christians, she plainly declared that her object was to remove an obstacle to the natural development of her power and the promotion of her interests, it would not lie in the mouth of any great European State to blame her.

What Eng-
land wants.

We retain our hold on Gibraltar, though part of the territory of a foreign Power, because we consider it our interest to do so; and we should also regard this as a sufficient justification for our occupying Constantinople or Egypt. This is not a question of abstract morality, but of interest: it is the business of England to look at the matter from an English, not from a Russian point of view. The Russians want Constantinople for their own advantage; England wants to keep them out of it for hers; and putting out of the question the moral right given to her by the Treaty of Paris, she is just as much entitled to prevent the Russians, if she can, from taking Constantinople as they are to attempt its conquest. The practical issue is, are we to step out of our way to let Russia do her will, even if—which, as has been shown, is very questionable—a few millions of Slavs will have their condition improved by our doing so? Yes, say our sentimental politicians; we should support the oppressed, however much our own interests may suffer. Such a doctrine may be admirably suited to the hermit's cell, but has nothing to do with the rough code of morals

accepted in the practical affairs of life. We must take the world as we find it, and fight our enemies with weapons which can hurt them, not strike in the air while they aim at our hearts. If we are to adopt the principles of Messrs. Freeman and Gladstone, let us at least be consistent; let us give up India and Gibraltar, sell our ironclads, disband our army, and nobly starve in the consciousness of possessing virtues that are not of this world.

Having thus cleared the ground, it may be useful to recapitulate the results which have been arrived at. These are:

Recapitulation of results.

1st. Every great Power in Europe has an interest in keeping Russia out of Turkey.

2nd. It is therefore necessary, from a political point of view, not to allow the Russian power in Eastern Europe to extend beyond its present limits.

3rd. This is also desirable from a philanthropic point of view; for

(a) The world in general would suffer by the Russian power being established on the Balkan.

(b) The Turkish Slavs themselves would

suffer; for it is not probable that Russia, who has shown herself to be cruel, tyrannical, and intolerant in Poland, Khiva, and Circassia, will suddenly become humane, tolerant, and liberal in Turkey.

4th. Political autonomy for the Turkish Christians is only another name for Russian predominance.

5th. The conduct of Russia in the present crisis has shown that she is not working for the Turkish Slavs, but for herself.

It appears, therefore, that whether from a political or a philanthropic point of view, the first thing to be considered by England in the present crisis is her own interest, and that the future destiny of the Turkish Slavs, though not to be excluded from consideration altogether, is a matter entirely subsidiary to that of putting a stop to Russian

Policy of the encroachment. What has been the policy of the present Government. Government in this respect? Is it true, as their accusers assert, that they have "bolstered up" the Turks, that they have disregarded the just claims of the Christians, and that,

by taking up an isolated attitude, they have prevented that "European concert," which, we are assured, would have at once solved the Eastern Question? It will be worth while, by means of a careful review of Lord Derby's despatches, to see how far these accusations are well founded.

That the Government has made mistakes—that it has done things which it would not have done if it could have looked into the future—is only to say that it is not exempt from the ordinary failings of humanity. The question is not whether it has erred in matters of detail, but whether the objects of its policy have been the right ones, and whether it has consistently and firmly pursued those objects.

When the insurrection in the Herzegovina first broke out, it met with but little sympathy in England, and assuredly any attempt on the part of the Government to give its countenance to the rising would have been universally condemned by public opinion. If the subjects of any State choose to rise against their government, that is a matter of internal politics which need not in any way concern the governments of other States; but a foreign Power has not the right to assist the insurgents in

The insurrection in Herzegovina.

violation of treaties to which it was a party unless it openly declares war, especially when the insurrection, as in the present case, is known to have been the result of the ambitious designs of an aggressive neighbour. It was in accordance with this principle that Lord Derby acted throughout the whole course of the insurrection. He informed the Turkish Government* that it "should rely on its own resources to suppress the insurrection, and should deal with it as a local outbreak of disorder rather than give international importance to it by appealing for support to other Powers;" and when a consular mission to the insurgents was proposed, he accepted it with reluctance, on the ground that "such an intervention is scarcely compatible with the independent authority of the Porte over its own territory, offers an inducement to insurrection as a means of appealing to foreign sympathy against Turkish rule, and may not improbably open the way to further diplomatic interference in the internal affairs of the Empire"—an anticipation which, as we all know, was afterwards only too completely realized.†

* Despatch to Sir Henry Elliot of the 25th January, 1876.

† Ibid.

At the same time, Lord Derby did not fail, when ^{Massacres of Christians.} massacres of the Christian inhabitants of Turkey were brought to his notice, to interfere, from motives of humanity, on their behalf. So early as November, 1875,* the British Ambassador at Constantinople made representations to the Turkish Government with regard to a massacre of this kind, and induced the Grand Vizier to take steps to secure the punishment of those concerned in the outrage.

In his remarks on the Andrassy Note† Lord ^{The Andrassy Note.} Derby adhered to the same policy as he had adopted from the commencement of the insurrection. The proposals in that Note,‡ he said, “do not conflict with the ninth article of the Treaty of Paris;” they “are in the nature of suggestions or recommendations for adoption by the Porte in its endeavours to put an end to the insurrection, and do not involve any interference in the relations existing between the Sultan and his subjects,

* Despatch to Sir Henry Elliot of the 8th of December, 1875.

† Despatch to Sir Henry Elliot of the 25th January, 1876.

‡ Appendix II.

nor in the internal administration of the Empire.” “What appears to Her Majesty’s Government to be essential,” he continued, “is that the Porte should act promptly and vigorously in the execution of the reforms,” and that “the officers appointed to execute” them should be “men of energy and determination, who will not be deterred by local apathy or prejudices, who will be able and willing to repress with severity such atrocities as the murders of the returning refugees at Popopovlie (reported by Consul Holmes, on the 26th October), and who will do their utmost to restore a feeling of security to the Christian population. Unless such a feeling can be produced, no effectual pacification of the insurgent districts can reasonably be expected.” It will be observed here that Lord Derby does not, as is asserted by his opponents, support the Porte against the insurgents, but only strives to maintain the sovereignty of the Sultan as guaranteed by the Treaty of Paris, at the same time endeavouring to obtain such redress for the misgoverned Christian populations as is compatible with that Treaty. Knowing that the insurrection was the consequence, not so much of

Turkish oppression as of foreign agitation, Lord Derby consistently opposed any interference with the "independence and territorial integrity of the Ottoman Empire" (Treaty of Paris, Article 7), at the same time urging the Porte, through our Ambassador, to take immediate steps for depriving its Christian subjects of any just grievance that might serve as a pretext for continuing the rising.

. This was the spirit of the Andrassy Note ; it was not that of the Berlin, or rather the Russian <sup>The Berlin Memo-
random.</sup> Memorandum. The proposals in that Memorandum,* as Lord Derby pointed out, were not of a nature either to restore peace or to maintain the sovereignty of the Sultan. "The concentration of the Turkish troops," he said, "in certain places would be delivering up the whole country to anarchy, particularly when the insurgents are to retain their arms. The 'consular supervision' would reduce the authority of the Sultan to nullity, and, without force to support it, supervision would be impossible. Even if there were any prospect of the Porte being willing and able

* Appendix III.

to come to an arrangement with the insurgents on the basis proposed, which Her Majesty's Government scarcely believe possible, the intimation with which the Memorandum closes would render any such negotiation almost certainly abortive ; for it could not be supposed that the insurgents would accept any terms of pacification from the Porte in face of the declaration that if the insurrection continued after the armistice, the Powers would intervene further.''* Her Majesty's Government, therefore, could not "accept, for the sake of the mere appearance of concert, a scheme in the preparation of which they have not been consulted, and which they do not believe calculated to effect the object with which they are informed it has been framed."

Lord Derby's refusal could certainly not be attributed to any partiality for the Porte ; for, in a despatch addressed to Sir Henry Elliot on the same date as that above quoted, he said that the Government "cannot conceal from themselves that the gravity of the situation has arisen in a great measure from the weakness and apathy of the

* Despatch to Lord Odo Russell of the 19th of May, 1876.

Porte in dealing with the insurrection in its earlier stages, and from the want of confidence in Turkish statesmanship and powers of government shown by the state of financial, military, and administrative collapse into which the country has been allowed to fall. The responsibility of this condition of affairs must rest with the Sultan and his Government; and all that can be done by the Government of Her Majesty is to give such friendly counsel as circumstances may require. *They cannot control events to which the neglect of ordinary principles of good government may expose the Turkish Empire."*

The decisive attitude taken up by England at this point of the negotiations—which it is now the cue of certain politicians to condemn—was at the time hailed with gratitude by public opinion in Germany, Austria, France, and Italy, and unanimously greeted by Parliament and the press as a triumph of English diplomacy, and a brilliant contrast to the timid and wavering policy of most of the statesmen who have, since Lord Palmerston, directed the foreign affairs of this country. If Lord Derby had, as his opponents now say he

should have done (they did not at the time) accepted the Memorandum, he would not have benefited the Christian subjects of the Porte, but have connived at the designs of Russia. A game of brag with Russia for the favour of the Turkish Christians must inevitably have led to England being the loser, for the interest of Russia is obviously to make them as independent of the Porte, and consequently as dependent upon herself, as possible; while that of England is to do everything to obviate such a result.

Although, however, Lord Derby declined, as he said in his answer to the City deputation last September, "to be guilty of the quackery of putting his name to a scheme which he believed in his conscience would not work," he did not cease to impress on the Porte the necessity of granting effectual reforms to its Christian subjects. He took the earliest opportunity of doing this on the accession of Sultan Mourad (despatch to Sir Henry Elliot of the 13th of June, 1876); and at the same time he continued his negotiations with the other Powers for the restoration of peace. "It was not a part of the system or policy of Eng-

land," he said to Count Schouvaloff,* "to take up a position of isolation in Eastern matters, as, indeed, our conduct during the last few months had shown. Her Majesty's Government had given their support to the Note of Count Andrassy, though at no time sanguine of the results to be expected from it; they had dissented from the policy indicated by the Berlin Memorandum for reasons frankly stated by them at the time, and which they still held to be valid; it now appeared that action on that document was indefinitely postponed; and, as far as I saw, there was no present cause for difference between Her Majesty's Government and those of other Powers."† A similar statement was made by Lord Derby to Count Beust, the Austro-Hungarian Ambassador (Despatch to Sir A. Buchanan of the 22nd of June, 1876).

It has been already shown (p. 61) that strong representations were addressed to the Porte in December, 1875, with regard to the massacre of some Christians in Bosnia. Similar remonstrances

The cruelties
in Bulgaria.

* Despatch to Lord A. Loftus of the 14th June, 1876.

† See also Despatch to Count Schouvaloff of the 29th of June, 1876.

were made on other occasions of a like kind ; and when the news came of the so-called " atrocities " in Bulgaria, Lord Derby addressed a despatch, dated the 13th of July, 1876, to Sir Henry Elliot, instructing him to make an inquiry into the matter, and to warn the Porte " against the toleration of acts committed by its troops which would arouse the reprobation of the civilized world." On the following day the Ambassador was instructed to bring the reports of Consul Dupuis relative to these outrages to the knowledge of the Porte, and at the same time to " urge strongly that directions be given to the local authorities to lose no time in repressing these outrages and punishing those concerned in them ; that a proclamation be issued, prohibiting under severe penalties the sale of women and children ; that the immediate release be effected of all persons who are held in illegal captivity by Circassians or other parties, and that the local authorities take charge of such released captives, when requisite." Further, on the 8th of the following month, Lord Derby wrote to Sir Henry Elliot : " You cannot speak too strongly of the horror

which the statements received have aroused in the Government and people of this country ;” and in his despatch of the 21st of September, a week after the arrival of Mr. Baring’s report confirming the statements respecting the outrages in Bulgaria, Lord Derby said : “The Porte cannot afford to contend with the public opinion of other countries, nor can it suppose that the Government of Great Britain, or any of the Signatory Powers of the Treaty of Paris, can show indifference to the sufferings of the Bulgarian peasantry under this outbreak of vindictive cruelty. No political considerations would justify the toleration of such acts ; and one of the foremost conditions for the settlement of the questions now pending must be that ample reparation shall be afforded to the sufferers, and their future security guaranteed.”

The above extracts will show that Lord Derby was by no means sparing in his condemnation of the conduct of the Turkish Government in this matter. The indignation which it produced in England was very natural, and its expression at public meetings would have been unobjectionable

if it had not been used for party purposes, to throw discredit on the Government and mislead foreign countries as to the real feeling of the English people with regard to its Eastern policy. There can now be no doubt that if it had not been for these meetings, and Mr. Gladstone's unfortunate and ill-timed polemical effusions, the Servians would not have refused the prolonged suspension of hostilities which was offered by the Porte* last September; less obstinacy would have been exhibited at Constantinople in resisting our proposals of peace, and Russia, seeing that the English Government and nation were at one in a determination to check her aggressive policy, would have refrained from precipitating matters to a crisis.

The English
Ultimatum.

It also appears from the despatch of last October, above referred to, that so far from England having given any support to the Porte against the demands of the other Powers for an armistice, she actually presented an ultimatum of her own at Constantinople, nearly a month before that of Russia. On the 5th of October, Sir Henry Elliot was instructed "to intimate that, in case of the refusal of an

* Despatch to Lord A. Loftus of the 30th of October, 1876.

armistice, he was instructed to leave Constantinople, as it would then be evident that all further exertions on the part of Her Majesty's Government to save the Porte from ruin would become useless."

It is not necessary to enlarge here on the events which followed, for they are fresh in the memory of every one. It will be sufficient to remark that up to the time at least of the acceptance of the Conference, England has no reason to be ashamed of the part she has played in the negotiations. She reluctantly joined the other Powers, on the invitation of the Porte, and anxious not to disturb the European concert, in various attempts to pacify the insurgent provinces, though anticipating that they would only lead to further complications; and her apprehensions were justified by the event. She accepted the Andrassy Note, approving of its principles, but doubting whether at the time they could practically be carried out; and her doubts proved well-founded. She rejected the Berlin Memorandum, which was concurred in by some of the other Powers, not because they believed in its efficacy, but apparently from a disinclination to

offend Russia. That document has now been consigned to the limbo of diplomatic failures, and the Powers have returned, under the guidance of England, to the principles of the Andrassy Memorandum, which by her suggestion were made the bases of discussion for a Conference. And from first to last, while holding steadfastly to the principle of the independence and integrity of the Ottoman Empire, as being stipulated by the Treaty of Paris, and essential to the preservation of her interests, she has incessantly urged the Porte to reform its Government with a view to ameliorating the condition of its Christian subjects.

What should
be England's
Policy?

I will now venture to make some suggestions as to what should, in my opinion, be the policy of this country in the present crisis. Three distinct proposals have been made on the subject: first, to ally ourselves with Russia, for what would practically be the destruction of the Turkish rule; second, to do our utmost for the maintenance of the Turkish rule; and third, to act as a police for the purpose of enforcing internal reforms in the Ottoman Empire. In considering the first of these proposals, it is necessary to inquire whether and in

what respects the relative positions of England and Russia in the East have been modified by the Crimean war. Setting aside the primary origin of that war, the ownership of the Holy Places—inasmuch as that did not affect England—the question which was fought out on the bloody fields of Alma and Inkerman, and ostensibly settled by the Treaty of Paris, remains in 1876 what it was in 1854; namely, that of transferring Constantinople from an Ottoman to a Muscovite rule. The Treaty of Paris clearly stipulated that the internal organisation of the Ottoman Empire was to be left in the hands of the ruler of that Empire. Great internal reforms, we all admit, are needed in Turkey; but that does not justify the interference of Russia in her internal organisation. Nor, because a few thousand irregular troops have committed atrocities revolting to humanity, is Russia, on the plea of civilisation, entitled to carry out her policy of twenty years ago, based as it is simply on aggressive ambition; or England obliged to stultify the course of action she adopted at the same period, and passively to allow Turkey to be dismembered. The politicians of the non-intervention or peace-at-

The proposed alliance with Russia.

any-price school would do well to consider what their theories, if put into practice, amount to. Let us suppose, for argument's sake, that it would be possible to exterminate the Mussulman from Europe. England might then, setting aside all considerations of the maintenance of her communications with the East, and of her supremacy as a naval power, adopt the view so ingeniously suggested by Mr. Gladstone, and ally herself with Russia, re-enacting the old part of the cat and the chestnuts in the fable. Mr. Gladstone does not say what he considers would be the ultimate results of such an alliance; he contents himself with drawing a pleasant picture of the Turk being driven by England and Russia, bag and baggage, from Europe. But, admitting that the Turk can be really expelled from his empire, who is to take his place? Is Turkey to be merely broken up into a chaotic agglomeration of autonomous states, each endowed with enough vitality to live in perpetual discord with its neighbour, but too weak long to maintain a separate and peaceful existence of its own? or rather may we not more rationally conclude that once those States are separated from

the Empire to which they belong, Russia's motto will be divide and govern; and that the Mussulman element having been eliminated, the Turkish Slavs would, by a simple process of absorption, become subjects of the Czar? The Porte may and no doubt now has become aware of the fact (if, indeed, it ever thought otherwise), that the assistance it received from England in the Crimean war, and her interference on its behalf at the present crisis, is not due to any inherent sympathy existing between Christian England and Islamite Turkey. Our policy was then what it must be now, one of interest. We wished, and we still wish to maintain the Ottoman Empire as a barrier to Russian aggrandisement, and it is simply ridiculous to represent England's intervention on behalf of Turkey as an unnatural alliance between Christian civilisation and Mussulman barbarism. Now, however, that Turkey is unquestionably aware of the true motives which justly actuate England's policy towards her, may it not be rationally assumed that if we were to leave her to the tender mercies of the Government of St. Petersburg, she might, and probably would, retaliate both upon us and upon her Christian

subjects by raising the standard of Islam? The Slavs and Greeks would then find themselves exposed to the horrors of a religious war waged with all the intensity of fanaticism; and England's danger would not be less, for we must not forget that forty millions of the subjects of our Indian Empire are Mahometans. Already influential Mahometan meetings have been called at Bombay and other places in India to urge upon Her Majesty's Government that their Turkish brethren should not be allowed to fall a prey to Muscovite rule. Once, however, they are fully convinced that England will do nought to save them, all the fierce animosities of race and religion will be unchained, and we may see a repetition of the terrible events of the Indian mutiny of 1857, with the additional danger that the then peaceable element of our Indian dominions would be turned into our bitterest and most implacable enemy.

Maintenance
of the Turk-
ish rule.

Let us now consider the second of the proposals above referred to—that the Turkish rule should be maintained. If Russia had abandoned her traditionally aggressive policy, and were sincerely anxious for those reforms in Turkish administra-

tion which should offer material guarantees for the improved condition of the Christian populations, then this country, in common with the other great Powers, would of course cordially acquiesce in her views and assist in so peaceful a consummation. But England, with the rest of the world, can, after the events of the last few months, hardly fail to be convinced that the real object of Russia is to encroach upon the integrity of the Ottoman Empire. The maintenance of that integrity is essential to English interests; and we must, therefore, consider whether, if it should be attacked by Russia, we should not wage a second Crimean war, with the same objects as the first, the "Bulgarian Atrocities" notwithstanding. It cannot be too often repeated that if this country is forced to draw the sword, English blood will not be spilt, as our political philanthropists would have us believe, for the defence of a barbarous and effete race, but because the establishment of an aggressive Power on the Balkan Peninsula would be a standing menace to England; and if, in the event of a Russian invasion of Turkey, England should be forced to wage war for the

reasons we have stated, it will be time enough when peace is again restored to enforce those internal reforms which are so urgently required.

Police Inter-
vention.

The third proposal is that of a species of police intervention in Turkey. On this it is to be observed that such a suggestion, taking the form of dictation to the Sovereign of a great Empire in his own capital at a moment when he has just assumed the reins of Government—when his soldiers are flushed with the success of recent victories, and the population is a prey to fanatical excitement—would probably have the effect, if it should be adopted under the pressure of circumstances, of so weakening the power of the Sultan as ultimately to lead to results the very reverse of what are now contemplated. The anarchy and misrule consequent upon such an event might then be used as an argument by Russia for carrying out at a later period, when she might be better prepared, designs which had for the moment been postponed.

The question of internal reform is, indeed, now entirely subordinate to the higher issue of checking Russian ambition. That England should

quietly look on while Russia is establishing herself in a position from which she may at any moment swoop down upon our communications with India, must be simply inconceivable to those who still believe in English pluck and the traditions of English greatness. Such conduct would simply reduce our country to the position of a vassal of Russia, depending for its prosperity and comfort on the good pleasure of the Czar; and it may fearlessly be asserted, notwithstanding the truckling arguments of Mr. Bright and his friends, that rather than sink so low, England would fight to the last.

Is England
to be a vassal
of Russia?

What is to be done to prevent such a result? So long as Russia does not push matters to a war with Turkey, all that England has to do is to maintain an attitude of vigilant observation, ready to fight if need be, but unwilling to draw the sword while there still remains a chance of a pacific settlement. But what if Russia marches her armies into Turkish territory? In that case, we are told, England will occupy Constantinople. But is this enough? Are we to remain with some 15,000 or 20,000 men in that city, in

What should
be done to
prevent this?

Occupation
of Constantinople in-
sufficient.

the anomalous position of the occupiers of the capital of a State which is not our ally, while Russia overruns the whole of Roumelia and Asia Minor with her troops? Say that we shall even then, thanks to Mr. Baker's fortifications, be able to maintain ourselves in Constantinople, although surrounded by enemies, and hundreds of miles from our nearest military station. Such a position could not in any case be tenable as a permanency. We should have to occupy Egypt and Crete at the cost of a vast expenditure of money, and an increase of our military forces; besides which it would be necessary for us to maintain a permanent fleet in the Eastern waters to counterbalance the fleet of Russia—which, as Lord Palmerston once justly observed, would be “simply a mauvaise plaisanterie.” But even in that case our position at Constantinople would be far from secure. We might hold it against Russian bayonets; but could we defend it against the all-powerful principle of nationality? If a great South Slavonic State were once established on the Balkan Peninsula, the cry for Constantinople as the national capital would be at least

as urgent as was that for Rome as the capital of Italy; some future Gladstone would rise to stir up English enthusiasm in favour of the Slavonic claims, and England would turn out "bag and baggage" from Constantinople as the French had to do from Rome.

A mere occupation of Constantinople, therefore, would not secure the results at which we should aim. It would entail heavy and permanent sacrifices of men, money, and ships, and it would not prevent Russia from extending her power to the Mediterranean, and sending her men-of-war from Salonica and Smyrna, to harass our communications with Egypt and Constantinople itself. To revert to Mr. Lowe's familiar illustration, we should, instead of locking the gate which keeps a fierce dog out of our house, allow him to go where he pleases, and pay an armed watchman to protect us in case of attack.

No one who has the interests of this country at heart, and is aware of the heavy sacrifices which would be entailed upon it by a war with Russia, would advocate such a war unless the conduct of that Power proved beyond a doubt that

A last effort
to secure
peace.

it contemplates an attack on the integrity of Turkey. The policy of England should be prudent, but firm and decided. If the promises and assurances conveyed by the Emperor Alexander to Lord Loftus are really sincere, and are not to be classed in the same category with those addressed by Count Schouvaloff to our Government in regard to Khiva, the demands of Russia at the Conference will be such as may readily be accepted by the Porte and supported by all the Powers, England included. Our Government has from the first shown that it also desires a real amelioration of the condition of the Turkish Christians; and if this is all that Russia wants, there need be no difficulty as to the question of guarantees. An Austrian or Italian military occupation of Bulgaria might be suggested, on the condition that the occupying Power should be bound by a protocol, signed by herself and the other guaranteeing Powers, to evacuate the territory in a specified period. But the object would be equally well attained by a joint occupation; a distinct arrangement being at the same time made by the Powers as to the period of such occupa-

tion, the forces to be employed, and the reforms to be carried out. That England, in making such a proposal, could be actuated by no other motive than an honest desire to maintain peace, no one would doubt; and if Russia refused it, all Europe would see that, while professing peace, Russia means war, and that the only way of arresting her aggressive policy is to resist her by force of arms.

The course which would in that case be most consistent with our national dignity, and at the same time be best calculated to secure our national interests, is that England should make war against Russia directly the Russian troops cross the Danube. But to do this effectually we must have allies. Our fleet did but little harm to Russia during the Crimean war, and we should not have been able, with the small military forces at our disposal, to wage that war if we had not previously secured the alliance of France. There is not much hope of obtaining such an alliance now; but there are other Powers which, being close to the scene of operations, and being vitally interested in the result of the struggle, would prove more useful

Our possible
allies.

Turkey and
Austria.

allies than Napoleon III., who first fought Russia to show the world his power and make himself agreeable to England, and afterwards induced England to conclude ineffectual terms of peace, because he wished to make a friend of Russia. These allies are, Austria and—notwithstanding the protestations of the humanitarians—Turkey herself. For you cannot defend a country against foreign invasion without becoming the ally of the rulers of that country ; otherwise any military co-operation becomes impossible. It is scarcely necessary, perhaps, here to repeat that an alliance with Turkey would not in any way mitigate our reprobation of the cruelties committed in Bulgaria, or prevent our taking steps for guarding against a repetition of them ; on the contrary, it would strengthen our hands in any such undertaking. We certainly should not hesitate, if India were in danger of a Russian invasion, to enter into an alliance, say with the Afghans, although we know them to be robbers and assassins ; and there is no reason why we should adopt different codes of political morality according to the Continent where we happen to be at war.

And now as to the advisability of an alliance with Austria—whose very existence, as we have shown, would be imperilled by the establishment on her frontier of an aggressive Empire, which would serve as a centre of attraction to the numerous Slavonic populations under her rule. The war establishment of the Austrian army is 1,137,400 men; it is highly trained and well-equipped, and the foreign officers who were present at the great manœuvres this year have strongly testified to its efficiency. There has been much idle talk about the Panslavist sympathies of the troops raised in the Slavonic provinces of Austria being likely to cause them to refuse to march against Russia. That there is a certain amount of Panslavist feeling among some revolutionary agitators in the Slavonic towns is unquestionable; but this feeling has not spread to the masses of the population, and still less to the ranks of the army, which do not recognize any national cause but that of the Austrian State. It is, indeed, not difficult to understand that Roman Catholic Croatia, Bohemia, Moravia, and Galicia have no sympathy with Russia, the persecutor of Roman Catholicism in Poland; and in Galicia,

which is predominantly Polish, to the antagonism of creed is superadded the even more bitter antagonism of nationality. We may assume, therefore, that Panslavist sympathies would not weaken the military resources of Austria in a war against Russia. In a Turkish campaign Austria may almost be said to hold the issue in her hands, for, being posted on the north-western frontier of Turkey in Transylvania, she can make a flank attack on an army coming from Russia, while the Turks opposed it in front. Suppose that an English contingent, landed by our fleet at Varna, at the same time marched upon the Russians from the east, and it may be pretty confidently asserted that the advance of the Russian army into European Turkey would be triumphantly repelled. As to Asia Minor, a combined Turko-English force would probably be as successful in beating back a Russian attack in that quarter as it was in 1853. Thus, by boldly going forward to meet our enemy, the war might be ended with a comparatively small expenditure of money and blood, and our interests would be as secure as before ; while by staying behind the walls of Constantinople, our position

in the East would be in constant danger, and we should have to keep up a largely increased army and fleet to protect it. An alliance with Austria, therefore, would be most valuable to us in case Russia should make war upon Turkey; and in order that we may not be taken unawares, it is clearly in England's interests that she should avail herself of any opportunity of securing such an alliance in view of possible eventualities.

And Germany? She owes some gratitude, no Policy of Germany. doubt, to the Czar for his "benevolent neutrality" in 1870; and, what will appear even more important to a Power which is so eminently practical in its policy, she must always bear in view the danger of provoking a Russo-French coalition against her; but it is impossible to believe that she would fight by the side of Russia in a war against Turkey. Her most vital interests—interests far more permanent than those involved in her present position towards France—must forbid the area of German influence from being closed in on the north and east by the power of Russia. Sooner than allow this, she must fight in the end, even at the risk of a Russo-French

coalition. But she will not, of course, do so unless her active interference should become absolutely necessary for her own security. Meanwhile, she will leave the field to the Powers which are more directly interested, trusting, as she has every right to do, that the united forces of England, Austria, and Turkey will be more than a match for the power of the Czar. This would have for the Germans the twofold advantage of weakening Russia in view of a future French coalition, and of preventing her from extending her power in the East at the expense of Germany.

Policy of
France.

The danger of an extension of Russian power in Eastern Europe must also determine the policy of France, whose interests in the East, as has been shown, are at least as important as those of Germany. These two Powers would play a similar part in the Russo-Turkish war to that assumed by Russia and Austria in the Franco-German war. It is probable, however, that neither of them will earn a title to the gratitude of Russia, as Russia did to that of Germany. Neither France nor Germany can desire a triumph of Russian policy in the East, though the interests of the former

Power would rather tend to peace, as preserving a powerful ally for the day of revenge, while Germany would be more disposed to see the present complications end in a war which would indefinitely postpone that day and weaken her Northern neighbour.

As to Italy, who, being essentially a Mediter-^{Policy of}
ranean Power, is interested even more than France Italy.
in preventing an extension of Russia's naval power in the East,—the suggestion that she would take advantage of a war between Russia and Austria to seize the Trentino can only be regarded as a libel on the honesty and sagacity of her statesmen. This idea has, of course, arisen from the policy she pursued in 1866; but there is no real similarity between the two cases, for the emancipation of Lombardy and Venetia from the rule of Austria had long been the dream of Italian patriots and the openly acknowledged policy of the Sardinian Government; while Italy is now on the best terms with Austria, and the inhabitants of the Trentino have no complaint whatever to make against the Austrian rule. Such an attempt to profit by her neighbour's difficulties would be

a piece of base treachery that would bring down upon the new Italian kingdom the reprobation of Europe.

Conclusion. It may fairly be assumed from the above considerations that a determined effort on the part of England to resist Russian encroachment in the East would meet with at least the sympathy of all the European Powers. I do not pretend, in the suggestions I have ventured to make, to lay down a complete scheme of policy which shall be applicable to all eventualities. The political situation changes from day to day, and what may now be prudent and wise may to-morrow become rash and impracticable. But the present crisis is one which eminently requires clearness and decision, both in those who direct and in those who support England's policy. On the course which our country will adopt during the next few months may depend her very existence as a first-class Power, the continuance of her commercial supremacy, and the well-being of all classes of her population. In such moments of great national effort it is especially important that we should all thoroughly understand our national interests

and aims; and it is hoped that the foregoing pages may in some degree contribute to such a result. They will, I think, show that England cannot permit Russia to acquire any hold, direct or indirect, on Turkish territory; that, even in the interest of the Turkish Christians, no attempt should be made or allowed to precipitate the fall of the Ottoman dominion by external forces; and that the principles which should guide our conduct in the ever-varying kaleidoscope of Eastern politics are, in the first place, the preservation of England's interests, and, next, as the only effectual means of protecting them, the uncompromising defence against Russian aggression of the sovereign power of the Sultan and the integrity of his Empire.

APPENDIX.

I. THE TREATY OF PARIS.

II. THE ANDRASSY NOTE.

III. THE BERLIN MEMORANDUM.

IV. LORD DERBY'S DESPATCHES.

THE TREATY OF PARIS.

Traité de Paix et d'Amitié conclu, le 30 Mars, 1856, entre la France, l'Autriche, le Royaume-uni de la Grande-Bretagne et d'Irlande, la Prusse, la Russie, la Sardaigne, et la Turquie.

Au nom de Dieu tout-puissant :

Leurs Majestés l'empereur des Français, la reine du royaume-uni de la Grande-Bretagne et d'Irlande, l'empereur de toutes les Russies, le roi de Sardaigne, et l'empereur des Ottomans, animés du désir de mettre un terme aux calamités de la guerre, et voulant prévenir le retour des complications qui l'ont fait naître, ont résolu de s'entendre avec Sa Majesté l'empereur d'Autriche sur les bases à donner au rétablissement et à la consolidation de la paix, en assurant, par des garanties efficaces et réciproques, l'indépendance et l'intégrité de l'empire Ottoman.

A cet effet, Leurs dites Majestés ont nommé pour leurs plénipotentiaires, savoir :

(Suivent les noms des plénipotentiaires avec le détail de leurs titres et dignités dans l'ordre suivant : M. le comte Walewsky et M. le Baron de Bourqueney, pour la France ; M. de Buol et M. de Hübner, pour l'Autriche ; Lord Clarendon et Lord Cowley, pour la Grande-Bretagne ; M.

le Comte Orloff et M. le Baron de Brunnow, *pour la Russie* ; M. de Cavour et M. de Villamarina, *pour la Sardaigne* ; Aali-Pacha et Mehemed-Djemil-Bey, *pour la Turquie*.—Puis le préambule continue ainsi :)

L'entente ayant été heureusement établie entre eux, Leurs Majestés l'empereur des Français, l'empereur d'Autriche, la reine du royaume-uni de la Grande-Bretagne et d'Irlande, l'empereur de toutes les Russies, le roi de Sardaigne et l'empereur des Ottomans, considérant que, dans un intérêt européen, Sa Majesté le roi de Prusse, signataire de la convention du treize juillet mil huit cent quarante et un, devait être appelée à participer aux nouveaux arrangements à prendre, et appréciant la valeur qu'ajouterait à une œuvre de pacification générale le concours de Sa dite Majesté, l'ont invitée à envoyer des plénipotentiaires au Congrès.

En conséquence, Sa Majesté le roi de Prusse a nommé pour ses principaux plénipotentiaires, savoir :

(*Suivent les noms et les titres de MM. de Manteuffel et de Hatzfeldt.*)

Les plénipotentiaires, après avoir échangé leurs pleins-pouvoirs, trouvés en bonne et due forme, sont convenus des articles suivants :

Article 1. Il y aura, à dater du jour de l'échange des ratifications du présent traité, paix et amitié entre Sa Majesté l'empereur des Français, Sa Majesté la reine du royaume-uni de la Grande-Bretagne et d'Irlande, Sa Majesté le roi de Sardaigne, Sa Majesté impériale le sultan, d'une part, et Sa Majesté l'empereur de toutes les Russies, de l'autre part, ainsi qu'entre leurs héritiers et successeurs, leurs Etats et sujets respectifs, à perpétuité.

Art. 2. La paix étant heureusement rétablie entre Leurs

dites Majestés, les territoires conquis ou occupés par leurs armées, pendant la guerre, seront réciproquement évacués.

Des arrangements spéciaux régleront le mode de l'évacuation, qui devra être aussi prompte que faire se pourra.

Art. 3. Sa Majesté l'empereur de toutes les Russies s'engage à restituer à Sa Majesté le sultan la ville et la citadelle de Kars, aussi bien que les autres parties du territoire ottoman dont les troupes russes se trouvent en possession.

Art. 4. Leurs Majestés l'empereur des Français, la reine du royaume-uni de la Grande-Bretagne et d'Irlande, le roi de Sardaigne et le sultan s'engagent à restituer à Sa Majesté l'empereur de toutes les Russies les villes et ports de Sébastopol, Balaklava, Kamiesch, Eupatoria, Kertsch, Ieni-Kaleh, Kinburn, ainsi que tous les autres territoires occupés par les troupes alliées.

Art. 5. Leur Majestés l'empereur des Français, la reine du royaume-uni de la Grande-Bretagne et d'Irlande, l'empereur de toutes les Russies, le roi de Sardaigne et le sultan accordent une amnistie pleine et entière à ceux de leurs sujets qui auraient été compromis par une participation quelconque aux événements de la guerre, en faveur de la cause ennemie.

Il est expressément entendu que cette amnistie s'étendra aux sujets de chacune des parties belligérantes qui auraient continué, pendant la guerre, à être employés dans le service de l'un des autres belligérants.

Art. 6. Les prisonniers de guerre seront immédiatement rendus de part et d'autre.

Art. 7. Sa Majesté l'empereur des Français, Sa Majesté l'empereur d'Autriche, Sa Majesté la reine du royaume-uni de la Grande-Bretagne et d'Irlande, Sa Majesté le roi de Prusse, Sa Majesté l'empereur de toutes les Russies, et Sa Majesté le roi de Sardaigne, déclarent la Sublime-Porte admise à par-

ticiper aux avantages du droit public et du concert européens. Leurs Majestés s'engagent, chacune de son côté, à respecter l'indépendance et l'intégrité territoriale de l'empire Ottoman, garantissent en commun la stricte observation de cet engagement, et considéreront, en conséquence, tout acte de nature à y porter atteinte comme une question d'intérêt général.

Art. 8. S'il survenait, entre la Sublime-Porte et l'une ou plusieurs des autres puissances signataires, un dissentiment qui menaçât le maintien de leurs relations, la Sublime-Porte et chacune de ces puissances, avant de recourir à l'emploi de la force, mettront les autres parties contractantes en mesure de prévenir cette extrémité par leur action médiatrice.

Art. 9. Sa Majesté impériale le sultan, dans sa constante sollicitude pour le bien-être de ses sujets, ayant octroyé un firman qui, en améliorant leur sort, sans distinction de religion ni de race, consacre ses généreuses intentions envers les populations chrétiennes de son empire, et voulant donner un nouveau témoignage de ses sentiments à cet égard, a résolu de communiquer aux puissances contractantes le dit firman, spontanément émané de sa volonté souveraine.

Les puissances contractantes constatent la haute valeur de cette communication. Il est bien entendu qu'elle ne saurait, en aucun cas, donner le droit aux dites puissances de s'immiscer soit collectivement, soit séparément, dans les rapports de Sa Majesté le sultan avec ses sujets, ni dans l'administration intérieure de son empire.

Art. 10. La convention du treize juillet mil huit cent quarante et un, qui maintient l'antique règle de l'empire Ottoman relative à la clôture des détroits du Bosphore et des Dardanelles, a été révisée d'un commun accord.

L'acte conclu à cet effet, et conformément à ce principe, entre les hautes parties contractantes, est et demeure annexé

au présent traité, et aura même force et valeur que s'il en faisait partie intégrante.

Art. 11. La mer Noire est neutralisée; ouverts à la marine marchande de toutes les nations, ses eaux et ses ports sont, formellement et à perpétuité, interdits au pavillon de guerre, soit des puissances riveraines, soit de toute autre puissance, sauf les exceptions mentionnées aux articles 14 et 19 du présent traité.

Art. 12. Libre de toute entrave, le commerce, dans les ports et dans les eaux de la mer Noire, ne sera assujéti qu'à des règlements de santé, de douane, de police, conçus dans un esprit favorable au développement des transactions commerciales.

Pour donner aux intérêts commerciaux et maritimes de toutes les nations la sécurité désirable, la Russie et la Sublime-Porte admettront des consuls dans leurs ports situés sur le littoral de la mer Noire, conformément aux principes du droit international.

Art. 13. La mer Noire étant neutralisée, aux termes de l'article 11, le maintien ou l'établissement sur son littoral d'arsenaux militaires-maritimes devient sans nécessité comme sans objet. En conséquence, Sa Majesté l'empereur de toutes les Russies et Sa Majesté impériale le sultan s'engagent à n'élever et à ne conserver, sur ce littoral, aucun arsenal militaire-maritime.

Art. 14. Leurs Majestés l'empereur de toutes les Russies et le sultan, ayant conclu une convention à l'effet de déterminer la force et le nombre des bâtiments légers, nécessaires au service de leurs côtes, qu'elles se réservent d'entretenir dans la mer Noire, cette convention est annexée au présent traité, et aura même force et valeur que si elle en faisait partie intégrante. Elle ne pourra être ni annulée ni modifiée sans l'assentiment des puissances signataires du présent traité.

Art. 15. L'acte du Congrès de Vienne ayant établi les principes destinés à régler la navigation des fleuves qui séparent ou traversent plusieurs États, les puissances contractantes stipulent entre elles qu'à l'avenir ces principes seront également appliqués au Danube et à ses embouchures. Elles déclarent que cette disposition fait désormais partie du droit public de l'Europe, et la prennent sous leur garantie.

La navigation du Danube ne pourra être assujettie à aucune entrave ni redevance qui ne serait pas expressément prévue par les stipulations contenues dans les articles suivants. En conséquence, il ne sera perçu aucun péage basé uniquement sur le fait de la navigation du fleuve, ni aucun droit sur les marchandises qui se trouvent à bord des navires. Les règlements de police et de quarantaine à établir pour la sûreté des États séparés ou traversés par ce fleuve, seront conçus de manière à favoriser, autant que faire se pourra, la circulation des navires. Sauf ces règlements, il ne sera apporté aucun obstacle, quel qu'il soit, à la libre navigation.

Art. 16. Dans le but de réaliser les dispositions de l'article précédent, une commission dans laquelle la France, l'Autriche, la Grande-Bretagne, la Prusse, la Russie, la Sardaigne et la Turquie seront chacune représentées par un délégué, sera chargée de désigner et de faire exécuter les travaux nécessaires, depuis Isatcha, pour dégager les embouchures du Danube, ainsi que les parties de la mer y avoisinantes, des sables et autres obstacles qui les obstruent, afin de mettre cette partie du fleuve et les dites parties de la mer dans les meilleures conditions possibles de navigabilité.

Pour couvrir les frais de ces travaux, ainsi que des établissements ayant pour objet d'assurer et de faciliter la navigation aux bouches du Danube, des droits fixes, d'un taux convenable, arrêtés par la commission à la majorité des voix, pourront être prélevés, à la condition expresse que, sous ce rapport comme

sous tous les autres, les pavillons de toutes les nations seront traités sur le pied d'une parfaite égalité.

Art. 17. Une commission sera établie et se composera des délégués de l'Autriche, de la Bavière, de la Sublime-Porte et du Wurtemberg (un pour chacune de ces puissances), auxquels se réuniront les commissaires des trois principautés danubiennes, dont la nomination aura été approuvée par la Porte. Cette commission, qui sera permanente, 1. élaborera les règlements de navigation et de police fluviale ; 2. fera disparaître les entraves, de quelque nature qu'elles puissent être, qui s'opposent encore à l'application au Danube des dispositions du traité de Vienne ; 3. ordonnera et fera exécuter les travaux nécessaires sur tout le parcours du fleuve ; et 4. veillera, après la dissolution de la commission européenne, au maintien de la navigabilité des embouchures du Danube et des parties de la mer y avoisinantes.

Art. 18. Il est entendu que la commission européenne aura rempli sa tâche, et que la commission riveraine aura terminé les travaux désignés dans l'article précédent, sous les n^{os} 1 et 2, dans l'espace de deux ans. Les puissances signataires réunies en conférence, informées de ce fait, prononceront, après en avoir pris acte, la dissolution de la commission européenne, et, dès lors, la commission riveraine permanente jouira des mêmes pouvoirs que ceux dont la commission européenne aura été investie jusqu'alors.

Art. 19. Afin d'assurer l'exécution des règlements qui auront été arrêtés d'un commun accord, d'après les principes ci-dessus énoncés, chacune des puissances contractantes aura le droit de faire stationner en tout temps deux bâtiments légers aux embouchures du Danube.

Art. 20. En échange des villes, ports et territoires énumérés dans l'article 4 du présent traité, et pour mieux assurer la liberté de la navigation du Danube, Sa Majesté l'empereur de

toutes les Russies consent à la rectification de sa frontière en Bessarabie.

La nouvelle frontière partira de la mer Noire, à un kilomètre à l'est du lac Bournà Sola, rejoindra perpendiculairement la route d'Akerman, suivra cette route jusqu'au val de Trajan, passera au sud de Bolgrad, remontera le long de la rivière de Yalpuck jusqu'à la hauteur de Saratsika, et ira aboutir à Katamori sur le Pruth. En amont de ce point, l'ancienne frontière entre les deux empires ne subira aucune modification.

Des délégués des puissances contractantes fixeront, dans ses détails, le tracé de la nouvelle frontière.

Art. 21. Le territoire cédé par la Russie sera annexé à la Principauté de Moldavie, sous la suzeraineté de la Sublime-Porte.

Les habitants de ce territoire jouiront des droits et privilèges assurés aux Principautés, et, pendant l'espace de trois années, il leur sera permis de transporter ailleurs leur domicile, en disposant librement de leurs propriétés.

Art. 22. Les Principautés de Valachie et de Moldavie continueront à jouir, sous la suzeraineté de la Porte et sous la garantie des puissances contractantes, des privilèges et des immunités dont elles sont en possession. Aucune protection exclusive ne sera exercée sur elles par une des puissances garantes. Il n'y aura aucun droit particulier d'ingérence dans leurs affaires intérieures.

Art. 23. La Sublime-Porte s'engage à conserver aux dites Principautés une administration indépendante et nationale, ainsi que la pleine liberté de culte, de législation, de commerce et de navigation.

Les lois et statuts aujourd'hui en vigueur seront revisés. Pour établir un complet accord sur cette revision, une commission spéciale, sur la composition de laquelle les hautes puissances contractantes s'entendront, se réunira sans délai à Bucharest, avec un commissaire de la Sublime-Porte.

Cette commission aura pour tâche de s'enquérir de l'état actuel des Principautés et de proposer les bases de leur future organisation.

Art. 24. Sa Majesté le sultan promet de convoquer immédiatement, dans chacune des deux provinces, un divan *ad hoc*, composé de manière à constituer la représentation la plus exacte des intérêts de toutes les classes de la société. Ces divans seront appelés à exprimer les vœux des populations relativement à l'organisation définitive des Principautés.

Une instruction du congrès réglera les rapports de la commission avec ces divans.

Art. 25. Prenant en considération l'opinion émise par les deux divans, la commission transmettra, sans retard, au siège actuel des conférences, le résultat de son propre travail.

L'entente finale avec la puissance suzeraine sera consacrée par une convention conclue à Paris entre les hautes parties contractantes; et un hattî-chériff, conforme aux stipulations de la convention, constituera définitivement l'organisation de ces provinces, placées désormais sous la garantie collective de toutes les puissances signataires.

Art. 26. Il est convenu qu'il y aura, dans les Principautés, une force armée nationale, organisée dans le but de maintenir la sûreté de l'intérieur et d'assurer celle des frontières. Aucune entrave ne pourra être apportée aux mesures extraordinaires de défense que, d'accord avec la Sublime-Porte, elles seraient appelées à prendre pour repousser toute agression étrangère.

Art. 27. Si le repos intérieur des Principautés se trouvait menacé ou compromis, la Sublime-Porte s'entendra avec les autres puissances contractantes sur les mesures à prendre pour maintenir ou rétablir l'ordre légal. Une intervention armée ne pourra avoir lieu sans un accord préalable entre ces puissances.

Art. 28. La Principauté de Servie continuera à relever de

la Sublime-Porte, conformément aux hatts impériaux qui fixent et déterminent ses droits et immunités, placés désormais sous la garantie collective des puissances contractantes.

En conséquence, la dite Principauté conservera son administration indépendante et nationale, ainsi que la pleine liberté de culte, de législation, de commerce, et de navigation.

Art. 29. Le droit de garnison de la Sublime-Porte, tel qu'il se trouve stipulé par les règlements antérieurs, est maintenu. Aucune intervention armée ne pourra avoir lieu en Servie sans un accord préalable entre les hautes puissances contractantes.

Art. 30. Sa Majesté l'empereur de toutes les Russies et Sa Majesté le sultan maintiennent, dans son intégrité, l'état de leurs possessions en Asie, tel qu'il existait légalement avant la rupture.

Pour prévenir toute contestation locale, le tracé de la frontière sera vérifié et, s'il y a lieu, rectifié, sans qu'il puisse en résulter un préjudice territorial pour l'une ou l'autre des deux parties.

A cet effet, une commission mixte, composée de deux commissaires russes, de deux commissaires ottomans, d'un commissaire français et d'un commissaire anglais, sera envoyée sur les lieux, immédiatement après le rétablissement des relations diplomatiques entre la cour de Russie et la Sublime-Porte. Son travail devra être terminé dans l'espace de huit mois, à dater de l'échange des ratifications du présent traité.

Art. 31. Les territoires occupés pendant la guerre par les troupes de Leurs Majestés l'empereur des Français, l'empereur d'Autriche, la reine du royaume-uni de la Grande-Bretagne et d'Irlande, et le roi de Sardaigne, aux termes des conventions signées à Constantinople, le douze mars mil huit cent cinquante-quatre, entre la France, la Grande-Bretagne et la Sublime-Porte ; le quatorze juin de la même année, entre l'Autriche et la Sublime-Porte, et le quinze mars mil huit cent cinquante-

cinq, entre la Sardaigne et la Sublime-Porte, seront ~~échangées~~ après l'échange des ratifications du présent traité, aussitôt que faire se pourra. Les délais et les moyens d'exécution feront l'objet d'un arrangement entre la Sublime-Porte et les puissances dont les troupes ont occupé son territoire.

Art. 32. Jusqu'à ce que les traités ou conventions qui existaient avant la guerre entre les puissances belligérantes aient été ou renouvelés ou remplacés par des actes nouveaux, le commerce d'importation ou d'exportation aura lieu réciproquement sur le pied des règlements en vigueur avant la guerre ; et leurs sujets, en toute autre matière, seront respectivement traités sur le pied de la nation la plus favorisée.

Art. 33. La convention conclue, en ce jour, entre Leurs Majestés l'empereur des Français, la reine du royaume-uni de la Grande-Bretagne et d'Irlande, d'une part, et Sa Majesté l'empereur de toutes les Russies, de l'autre part, relativement aux îles d'Aland, est et demeure annexée au présent traité, et aura même force et valeur que si elle en faisait partie.

Art. 34. Le présent traité sera ratifié, et les ratifications en seront échangées à Paris, dans l'espace de quatre semaines, ou plus tôt, si faire se peut.

En fait de quoi, les plénipotentiaires respectifs l'ont signé et y ont apposé le sceau de leurs armes.

Fait à Paris, le treizième jour du mois de mars de l'an mil huit cent cinquante-six.

(L. S.)

Signé A. WALEWSKI. BOURQUENEY. BUOL-SCHAUENSTEIN.
HUBNER. CLARENDON. COWLEY. MANTEUFFEL.
HATZFELD. ORLOFF. BRUNNOW. CAVOUR. DE
VILLAMARINA. AALI. MEHEMMED-DJÉMIL.

ARTICLE ADDITIONNEL ET TRANSITOIRE.

Les stipulations de la convention des détroits signée en ce jour ne seront pas applicables aux bâtiments de guerre em-

ployés par les puissances belligérantes pour l'évacuation par mer des territoires occupées par leurs armées ; mais les dites stipulations reprendront leur entier effet aussitôt que l'évacuation sera terminée.

Fait à Paris, le trentième jour du mois de mars de l'an mil huit cent cinquante-six.

(Mêmes signatures que ci-dessus.)

PREMIÈRE ANNEXE.

Au nom de Dieu tout-puissant.

Leurs Majestés l'empereur des Français, l'empereur d'Autriche, la reine du royaume-uni de la Grande-Bretagne et d'Irlande, le roi de Prusse, l'empereur de toutes les Russies, signataires de la convention du treize juillet mil huit cent quarante et un, et Sa Majesté le roi de Sardaigne, voulant constater, en commun, leur détermination unanime de se conformer à l'ancienne règle de l'empire ottoman, d'après laquelle les détroits des Dardanelles et du Bosphore sont fermés aux bâtimens de guerre étrangers tant que la Porte se trouve en paix :

Les dites Majestés, d'une part, et Sa Majesté le sultan, de l'autre, ont résolu de renouveler la convention conclue à Londres le treize juillet mil huit cent quarante et un, sauf quelques modifications de détail qui ne portent aucune atteinte au principe sur lequel elle repose.

En conséquence, Leurs dites Majestés ont nommé, à cet effet, pour leurs plénipotentiaires, savoir :—

(Suivent les noms et les titres des plénipotentiaires, dans le même ordre et avec le même détail que dans le préambule du traité principal.)

Lesquels, après avoir échangé leur pleins-pouvoirs trouvés en bonne et due forme, sont convenus des articles suivans :

Art. 1^{er}. Sa Majesté le sultan, d'une part, déclare qu'il a la ferme résolution de maintenir, à l'avenir, le principe invariablement établi comme ancienne règle de son empire, et en vertu duquel il a été de tout temps défendu aux bâtimens de guerre des puissances étrangères d'entrer dans les détroits des Dardanelles et du Bosphore, et que, tant que la Porte se trouve en paix, Sa Majesté n'admettra aucun bâtiment de guerre étranger dans les dits détroits.

Et Leurs Majestés l'empereur des Français, l'empereur d'Autriche, la reine du royaume-uni de la Grande-Bretagne et d'Irlande, le roi de Prusse, l'empereur de toutes les Russies et le roi de Sardaigne, de l'autre part, s'engagent à respecter cette détermination du sultan à se conformer au principe ci-dessus énoncé.

Art. 2. Le sultan se réserve, comme par le passé, de délivrer des firmans de passage aux bâtimens légers sous pavillon de guerre, lesquels seront employés, comme il est d'usage, au service de légations des puissances amies.

Art. 3. La même exception s'applique aux bâtimens légers sous pavillon de guerre que ciascuno des puissances contractantes est autorisée à faire stationner aux embouchures du Danube, pour assurer l'exécution des réglemens relatifs à la liberté de fleuve, et dont le nombre ne devra pas excéder deux pour chaque puissance.

Art. 4. La présente convention, annexée au traité général, signé à Paris en ce jour, sera ratifiée, et les ratifications en seront échangées dans l'espace de quatre semaines, ou plus tôt, si faire se peut.

En foi de quoi, les plénipotentiaires respectifs l'ont signée et y ont apposé le sceau de leurs armes.

Fait à Paris, le trentième jour du mois de mars de l'an mil huit cent cinquante-six.

(Mêmes signatures qu'au bas du traité principal.)

DEUXIÈME ANNEXE.

Au nom de Dieu tout-puissant.

Sa Majesté l'empereur de toutes les Russies et Sa Majesté Impériale le sultan, prenant en considération le principe de la neutralisation de la mer Noire établi par les préliminaires consignés au protocole No. 1, signé à Paris le 25 février de la présente année, et voulant, en conséquence, régler d'un commun accord le nombre et la force des bâtiments légers qu'elles se sont réservé d'entretenir dans la mer Noire pour le service de leurs côtes, ont résolu de signer, dans ce but, une convention spéciale, et ont nommé à cet effet :

(Suivent les noms et les titres des plénipotentiaires de Russie et de Turquie.)

Lesquels, après avoir échangé leurs pleins-pouvoirs, trouvés en bonne et due forme, sont convenus des articles suivants :

Art. 1^{er}. Les hautes parties contractantes s'engagent mutuellement à n'avoir dans la mer Noire d'autres bâtiments de guerre que ceux dont le nombre, la force et les dimensions sont stipulés ci-après.

Art. 2. Les hautes parties contractantes se réservent d'entretenir chacune, dans cette mer, six bâtiments à vapeur de cinquante mètres de longueur, à la flottaison d'un tonnage de huit cents tonneaux au maximum, et quatre bâtiments légers à vapeur ou à voiles d'un tonnage qui ne dépassera pas deux cents tonneaux chacun.

Art. 3. La présente convention, annexée au traité général signé à Paris en ce jour, sera ratifiée, et les ratifications en seront échangées dans l'espace de quatre semaines, ou plus tôt, si faire se peut.

En foi de quoi, les plénipotentiaires respectifs l'ont signée et y ont apposé le sceau de leurs armes.

Fait à Paris le trentième jour du mois de mars de l'an mil huit cent cinquante-six.

(Suivent les signatures des plénipotentiaires de Russie et de Turquie.)

TROISIÈME ANNEXE.

Au nom de Dieu tout-puissant.

Sa Majesté l'empereur des Français, Sa Majesté la reine du royaume-uni de la Grande-Bretagne et d'Irlande, et Sa Majesté l'empereur de toutes les Russies, voulant étendre à la mer Baltique l'accord si heureusement rétabli entre elles en Orient, et consolider par là les bienfaits de la paix générale, ont résolu de conclure une convention, et nommé à cet effet :

(Suivent les noms et les titres des plénipotentiaires de France, d'Angleterre, et de Russie.)

Lesquels, après avoir échangé leurs pleins-pouvoirs, trouvés en bonne et due forme, sont convenus des articles suivants :

Art. 1^{er}. Sa Majesté l'empereur de toutes les Russies, pour répondre au désir qui a été exprimé par Leurs Majestés l'empereur des Français et la reine du royaume-uni de la Grande-Bretagne et d'Irlande, déclare que les îles d'Aland ne seront pas fortifiées, et qu'il n'y sera maintenu ni créé aucun établissement militaire ou naval.

Art. 2. La présente convention, annexée au traité général signé à Paris en ce jour, sera ratifiée, et les ratifications en seront échangées dans l'espace de quatre semaines, ou plus tôt, si faire se peut.

En foi de quoi, les plénipotentiaires respectifs l'ont signée et y ont apposé le sceau de leurs armes.

Fait à Paris, le trentième jour du mois de l'an mil huit cent cinquante-six.

(Suivent les signatures des plénipotentiaires dénommés.)

II.

THE ANDRASSY NOTE.

Buda-Pest, le 30 Décembre, 1875.

Dès l'origine des troubles de l'Herzégovine, les Cabinets Européens intéressés à la paix générale ont dû fixer leurs regards sur des évènements qui menaçaient de la mettre en péril.

Les trois Cours d'Autriche-Hongrie, de Russie, et d'Allemagne, après avoir échangé leurs vues à cet égard, se sont unies pour employer en commun leurs efforts d'apaisement.

Ce but semblait trop conforme au vœu général pour qu'invités à s'y associer par l'organe de leurs Représentants à Constantinople, les autres Cabinets ne se soient pas empressés de joindre leurs efforts aux nôtres.

Les Puissances se sont mises d'accord pour user de toute l'influence dont elles disposent, afin de localiser le conflit et d'en diminuer les dangers et les calamités en empêchant la Serbie et le Monténégro de participer au mouvement.

Leur langage a été d'autant plus efficace qu'il a été identique, et a, par conséquent, témoigné de la ferme volonté de l'Europe de ne point permettre que la paix générale fût mise en péril par des entraînements irréflectifs.

Les Cabinets ont en outre offert au Gouvernement Turc les bons offices de leurs Agents Consulaires pour concourir à l'apaisement de l'insurrection. En poursuivant cette tâche,

ils ont eu soin également d'éviter toute ingérence et de ménager la dignité, les droits, et l'autorité du Souverain.

Les Délégués ne devaient pas s'ériger en commission d'enquête ni se faire les avocats des vœux des populations insurgées. Ils avaient pour mission de leur ôter toute illusion quant à une assistance du dehors, et de les exhorter à se disperser, après avoir exposé leurs vœux et leurs griefs. Les Puissances se réservaient seulement de soutenir auprès du Gouvernement Turc celles des demandes des insurgés qui seraient trouvées légitimes ; cette action conciliante des Cabinets attestait suffisamment l'intention amicale qui avait présidé à leurs bons offices. Elle témoignait qu'à leurs yeux il y avait une solidarité complète dans les intérêts de l'Europe, de la Porte, et des populations insurgées, afin de mettre un terme à une lutte ruineuse et sanglante et d'en prévenir le retour par des réformes sérieuses et des améliorations efficaces de nature à concilier les besoins réels du pays avec les légitimes exigences de l'autorité.

Tel est en peu de mots l'historique de l'action exercée par les Puissances depuis que l'insurrection a éclaté.

Les Cabinets ont été jusqu'à ce jour guidés surtout par le désir d'éviter tout ce qui eût pu être interprété comme une ingérence prématurée de l'Europe.

Dans cet ordre d'idées tous les Cabinets se sont bornés à conseiller au Gouvernement du Sultan de ne pas s'en tenir aux seules mesures militaires, mais de s'attacher à combattre le mal par des moyens moraux destinés à prévenir des perturbations futures.

En agissant ainsi, les Cabinets avaient en vue de fournir à la Sublime Porte l'appui moral dont elle avait besoin, et de lui donner en outre le temps de pacifier les esprits dans les provinces soulevées, espérant que tout danger d'une complication ultérieure se trouverait ainsi écarté.

Malheureusement leurs espérances ont été déçues. D'un côté, les réformes publiées par la Porte ne semblent pas avoir eu en vue l'apaisement des populations des provinces insurgées, ni être suffisantes pour atteindre ce but essentiel. De l'autre, les armes Turques n'ont pas réussi à mettre fin à l'insurrection.

Dans ces circonstances nous croyons que le moment est venu pour les Puissances de convenir d'une marche à suivre en commun, afin d'empêcher que le mouvement, en se prolongeant, ne finisse par compromettre la paix de l'Europe.

De même que les autres Puissances, nous avons applaudi aux bienveillantes intentions qui ont inspirés les récents manifestes du Sultan ; l'Iradé du 2 Octobre et le Firman du 12 Décembre contiennent une série de principes destinés à introduire des réformes dans l'organisation de l'Europe Ottoman. Il y a lieu de croire que ces principes, s'ils sont traduits en dispositions législatives sagement conçues, et si surtout leur mise en pratique correspond pleinement aux vues éclairées qui les ont dictés, apporteront de sérieuses améliorations dans l'administration de la Turquie.

Nous ne pouvons nous dissimuler toutefois que les réformes annoncées ne sauraient, à elles seules, avoir pour effet d'arrêter, même momentanément, l'effusion du sang dans l'Herzégovine et la Bosnie, ni, à plus forte raison, d'asseoir sur des bases solides le repos futur de ces parties du territoire Ottoman.

En effet, si l'on examine le contenu de l'Iradé du 2 Octobre et du Firman du 12 Décembre, on ne peut s'empêcher de reconnaître que la Sublime Porte semble s'être préoccupée plus de principes généraux qui, lorsqu'ils auront été précisés, pourront servir de bases à l'administration de l'Empire, que de la pacification des provinces aujourd'hui soulevées.

Or, il est de l'intérêt du Gouvernement Ottoman que la

pacification soit assurée avant tout : car tant qu'elle ne sera pas obtenue, il serait impossible de mettre en vigueur les principes même que la Porte a proclamées.

D'un autre côté, l'état d'anarchie qui sévit dans les provinces nord-ouest de la Turquie n'implique pas seulement des difficultés pour la Sublime Porte, il recèle aussi de graves dangers pour la paix générale, et les divers États Européens ne sauraient voir d'un œil indifférent se perpétuer et s'aggraver une situation qui, dès à présent, pèse lourdement sur le commerce et l'industrie, et qui, en ébranlant chaque jour davantage la confiance du public dans la conservation de la paix, tend à compromettre tous les intérêts.

Aussi croyons-nous remplir un devoir impérieux en appelant la sérieuse attention des Puissances Garantes sur la nécessité de recommander à la Sublime Porte de compléter son action par telles mesures qui paraissent indispensables pour rétablir l'ordre et la tranquillité dans les provinces ravagées en ce moment par le fléau de la guerre civile.

A la suite d'un échange confidentiel d'idées qui a eu lieu entre nous et les Cabinets de St. Pétersbourg et de Berlin, il a été reconnu que ces mesures doivent être recherchées dans une double direction. D'abord sur le terrain moral, et en second lieu sur le terrain matériel.

En effet, l'état matériel même des habitants Chrétiens de la Bosnie et de l'Herzégovine est dû, en dernière analyse, à leur position sociale et morale.

En examinant les causes fondamentales de la situation pénible où l'Herzégovine et la Bosnie se débattent depuis tant d'années, on est frappé tout d'abord des sentiments d'inimitié et de rancune qui animent les habitants Chrétiens et Mahométans, les uns contre les autres. C'est cette disposition des esprits qui a rendu impossible à nos délégués de persuader aux Chrétiens que les Autorités Turques pou-

vaient avoir la volonté sincère de redresser leurs griefs. Il n'est peut-être pas de contrée dans la Turquie d'Europe où l'antagonisme qui existe entre la croix et le croissant prenne des formes aussi acorbes. Cette haine fanatique et cette méfiance doivent être attribuées au voisinage de peuples de même race jouissant de la plénitude de cette liberté religieuse dont les Chrétiens de l'Herzégovine et de la Bosnie se voient privés. La comparaison incessante fait qu'ils ont le sentiment d'être courbés sous le joug d'une véritable servitude, que le nom même de raïa semble les placer dans une position moralement inférieure à celle de leurs voisins; qu'en un mot, ils se sentent esclaves.

Plus d'une fois, l'Europe a eu à se préoccuper de leurs plaintes et des moyens d'y mettre un terme. Le Hatti-Houmaïoum de 1856 est un des fruits de la sollicitude des Puissances. Mais aux termes même de cet acte, la liberté des cultes est encore limitée par des clauses qui, surtout en Bosnie et dans l'Herzégovine, sont maintenues avec une rigueur qui chaque année provoquait de nouveaux conflits. La construction des édifices consacrés au culte et à l'enseignement, l'usage des cloches, la constitution de communautés religieuses se trouvent encore assujettis dans ces provinces à des entraves qui apparaissent aux Chrétiens comme autant de souvenirs toujours vivaces de la guerre de conquête, qui ne leur font voir dans les Musulmans que des ennemis de leur foi, et perpétuent en eux l'impression qu'ils vivent sous le joug d'un esclavage qu'on a le droit et le devoir de secouer.

Le dernier Firman touche bien ce point de la liberté de religion, ainsi que l'avaient déjà fait du reste le Hatti-Chérif de 1839, le Hatti-Houmaïoum de 1856, et d'autres actes émanées de la Sublime Porte. Il confirme les pouvoirs dont sont investis les patriarches et autres chefs spirituels pour les affaires de leurs communautés respectives et pour le libre

exercice de leurs cultes ; mais il leur assigne “ pour limites les droits et autorisations qui leur ont été octroyés.” Il promet aussi des facilités pour la construction des églises et des écoles, promesse qui a été plus d’une fois consignée dans des documents officiels, mais qui ne saurait tranquilliser parce que sa réalisation dépend des autorités provinciales qui, subissant la pression locale, ne pourront même les mettre à exécution, à moins que le principe ne soit hautement proclamé.

Le Firman qui vient d’être promulgué ne dépasse donc point la mesure de ce qui a été accordé par le Hatti-Houmayoum, lequel, ainsi que je l’ai fait ressortir plus haut, entoure la liberté religieuse de restrictions qui, dans le cours de ces dernières années, ont provoqué de nombreux conflits. Rétrécies comme elles le sont, les concessions dont il s’agit ont toujours été insuffisantes pour contenter les Chrétiens. A plus forte raison en sera-t-il ainsi aujourd’hui, après les événements qui sont venus ensanglanter le pays et qui n’ont fait qu’envénimer l’antagonisme qui sépare les deux croyances. Une fois l’insurrection étouffée, l’élément Mahométan se considérant comme vainqueur, cherchera sans doute à se venger sur les Chrétiens des pertes qu’une lutte aussi violente lui a fait subir. Un état de choses qui rende possible la coexistence des populations qui viennent de se combattre avec tant d’acharnement ne pourra donc être assuré que si la religion Chrétienne est placée en droit et en fait sur un pied d’égalité complète avec l’Islamisme, que si elle est hautement reconnue et respectée et non pas tolérée, comme elle l’est aujourd’hui. C’est pourquoi les Puissances Garantes doivent selon nous non seulement demander à la Porte, mais obtenir d’elle comme première et principale concession, une liberté religieuse pleine et entière.

L’égalité devant la loi est un principe explicitement pro-

clamé dans le Hatti-Houmayoum et consacré par la législation. C'est sans doute pour cette raison que les actes récents du Sultan ont omis d'en faire mention.

Mais, tout en étant obligatoire en droit, ce principe n'est pas encore généralement appliqué dans tout l'Empire. De fait, le témoignage des Chrétiens contre les Musulmans est accueilli par les Tribunaux de Constantinople et de la plupart des autres grandes villes, mais dans quelques Provinces éloignées, telles que l'Herzégovine et la Bosnie, les Juges se refusent à en reconnaître la validité. Il importerait donc de prendre des mesures pratiques, pour qu'à l'avenir les Chrétiens n'aient pas à redouter des dénis de justice.

Un autre point qui appelle un remède urgent c'est le fermage des contributions. Déjà le Hatti-Chérif de 1839, en parlant de ce système, s'exprimait dans les termes suivants : " Un usage funeste subsiste encore, quoiqu'il ne puisse avoir que des conséquences désastreuses : c'est celui des concessions vénales connue sous le nom d'Iltizan. Dans ce système l'administration civile et financière d'une localité est livrée à l'arbitraire d'un seul homme, c'est-à-dire, quelquefois à la main de fer des passions les plus violentes et les plus cupides."

Et le Hatti-Houmayoum de 1856 porte ce qui suit : " On avisera aux moyens les plus prompts et les plus énergiques de corriger les abus dans la perception des impôts, notamment des dîmes. Le système de la perception directe sera successivement et aussitôt que faire se pourra substitué au régime des fermes dans toutes les branches du revenu de l'Etat."

Malgré ces déclarations formelles le système du fermage est encore debout dans toute son étendue.

Aujourd'hui la Sublime Porte fait entrevoir des réformes dans cette direction, mais sans rien préciser. Le Firman du

12 Décembre qualifie de nouveau d'anormal le régime de perception des contributions actuellement en vigueur. Il ordonne de rechercher un mode d'unification des impôts. Il prescrit encore de prendre des mesures "pour prévenir l'arbitraire dans la perception de la dîme par l'intermédiaire des fermiers," mais ils n'abolit pas le fermage.

Si l'on veut donc enlever à l'insurrection un aliment essentiel et incessant, l'un des points qu'il faut demander à la Porte, c'est qu'elle émette la déclaration nette et catégorique que le régime du fermage des contributions est supprimé, non seulement de droit mais de fait, pour la Bosnie et l'Herzégovine, et il faut que cette mesure reçoive une application immédiate.

Une des causes qui aggravent encore le fardeau matériellement, déjà si lourd, des impôts en Bosnie et dans l'Herzégovine, c'est que les habitants se croient exploités financièrement au profit du centre. Ils ont la conviction que le rendement des contributions n'est point consacré à subvenir aux nécessités de la province elle-même, mais que le total des sommes recueillies est immédiatement dirigé sur Constantinople pour être employé à l'usage du Gouvernement central.

Il serait donc nécessaire d'alléger moralement le poids des charges que la province a à supporter, en obtenant que, sans préjudice de ce qu'exigent les dépenses de l'Empire, une partie du produit des taxes payées par la Province soit réservée à des destinations profitables à ses propres intérêts.

Dans ce but la Porte devrait déclarer que le revenu des contributions indirectes serait, comme par le passé, affecté aux besoins de l'Empire tout entier, mais que les fonds provenant des contributions directes resteraient dans la province et seraient exclusivement appliqués dans son intérêt, à féconder ses ressources et à augmenter son bien-être.

L'exécution de cette disposition devrait être placée sous le contrôle de la Commission Elective dont il va être question dans le cours de ce travail.

La triste condition des Chrétiens de la Bosnie et de l'Herzégovine tient en grande partie à la nature des rapports qui existent entre la population des campagnes et les propriétaires fonciers. Les difficultés agraires ont toujours eu un caractère tout particulier d'aigreur dans les pays où la classe des propriétaires diffère, soit par la religion, soit par la nationalité, de la masse des cultivateurs. On n'a que trop d'exemples des luttes passionnées qui ont été la conséquence d'une situation pareille.

Dans les Provinces dont nous nous occupons la presque totalité des terres qui n'appartiennent pas à l'Etat ou aux mosquées se trouve entre les mains des Musulmans, tandis que la classe agricole se compose de Chrétiens des deux rites. La question agraire s'y complique donc de l'antagonisme religieux.

Après la répression de la première insurrection des Begs de Bosnie en 1851, le servage a été aboli ; mais ainsi qu'il arrive souvent en pareil cas, cette mesure, au lieu d'alléger la condition des paysans n'a fait que l'aggraver. Ils ne sont plus traités par ceux-ci avec les mêmes ménagements qu'autrefois. Aujourd'hui il n'y a plus en présence que deux intérêts et deux religions antagonistes. A partir du moment où la disparition du régime féodal est venue transformer les anciens serfs en fermiers ou métayers, les pratiques excessives des propriétaires ont provoqué de nombreux soulèvements partiels ou généraux. Un mouvement de ce genre ayant éclaté en 1858 dans le nord de la Bosnie, la Porte s'est trouvée amenée à s'occuper des contestations qui y avaient donné lieu. Des délégués des deux parties furent mandés à Constantinople, et après de longs pourparlers, dans lesquels l'intercession officieuse de l'Inter-

nonce de Sa Majesté l'Empereur et Roi eut sa part, un firman du Sultan fut obtenu dont les dispositions semblèrent à cette époque propres à concilier assez heureusement les intérêts des agriculteurs fonciers. Toutefois ce firman n'a jamais été mis en vigueur.

Il y aurait lieu d'examiner si quelques unes des dispositions de ce document ne pourraient pas aujourd'hui encore servir de point de départ à un arrangement équitable, apte à améliorer la condition de la population rurale, ou s'il conviendrait de faire intervenir le trésor public pour faciliter l'exécution des mesures à prendre dans ce but, à l'instar de ce qui a eu lieu, il y a une vingtaine d'années, en Bulgarie, où les charges foncières ont été rachetées au moyen de l'émission de titres publics dits *sekims*. Nous sentons que la tâche est difficile et que son accomplissement ne saurait être l'œuvre d'un jour ; mais nous croyons qu'il est important d'y travailler, afin d'améliorer le sort de la population rurale dans la Bosnie et l'Herzégovine, et de fermer ainsi une des plaies béantes de l'état social de ces provinces. Il ne nous paraîtrait pas impossible de trouver une combinaison qui permît graduellement aux paysans de se rendre acquéreurs, à des conditions peu onéreuses, de parcelles de terrains incultes que l'état mettait en vente. Tout en continuant, s'ils le désiraient, à cultiver à titre de fermiers les propriétés de leurs compatriotes Musulmans, ils arriveraient successivement à posséder eux-mêmes un petit immeuble qui leur assurerait une certaine indépendance, et les mettrait à l'ordre de leurs exactions.

Si l'on songe au peu de créance que rencontrent auprès des populations Chrétiennes les promesses de la Sublime Porte, on ne peut se dissimuler que les réformes promulguées ne pourront inspirer la confiance nécessaire qu'à condition que l'on crée en même temps une institution propre à offrir une certaine garantie que ces réformes seront sérieusement appliquées. En

se bornant à remettre leur exécution à la discrétion des Gouvernements de la Province, on ne parviendrait pas à surmonter la méfiance dont je parle. Il y aurait donc lieu d'établir une Commission de notables du pays, composée par moitié de Musulmans et de Chrétiens, et élue par les habitants de la Province suivant un mode qui serait déterminé par la Sublime Porte.

Je viens d'exposer les points dont il faudrait obtenir l'application aux Provinces soulevées pour pouvoir se livrer à l'espoir fondé d'une pacification.

Ces points, les voici :

La liberté religieuse, pleine et entière ;

L'abolition du fermage des impôts ;

Une loi qui garantisse que le produit des contributions directes de la Bosnie et de l'Herzégovine soit employé dans l'intérêt de la Province même, sous le contrôle des organes constituées dans le sens du Firman du 12 Decembre :

L'institution d'une Commission Spéciale, composée en nombre égal de Musulmans et de Chrétiens, pour contrôler l'exécution des réformes proposées par les Puissances, ainsi que de celles qui ont été proclamées dans l'Iradé du 2 Octobre, et dans le Firman du 12 Decembre ;

Enfin l'amélioration de la situation agraire des populations rurales.

Les premiers points pourraient et devraient être réalisés immédiatement par la Sublime Porte, la cinquième graduellement aussitôt que faire se pourra.

Si, indépendamment de ces concessions, qui nous paraissent les plus essentielles, la Bosnie et l'Herzégovine obtiennent encore les réformes suivantes indiquées dans le dernier Firman : un conseil provincial et des tribunaux librement élus par les habitants, l'inaliénabilité des juges, la justice laïque, la liberté individuelle, la garantie contre le mauvais traitement, la

réorganisation de la police dont les agissements ont soulevé tant de plaintes, la cessation des abus auxquels donnent lieu les prestations pour des travaux d'utilité publique, une juste réduction de la taxe d'exemption du service militaire, les garanties à donner au droit de propriété ;—si toutes ces réformes dont nous demandons la communication par la Porte, pour en prendre acte solennellement, sont appliquées dans les provinces insurgées, qui, à en juger par le texte du Firman, sembleraient ne pas devoir en bénéficier dès à présent, on pourrait espérer de voir ramener la paix dans ces contrées désolées.

Je me résume. Les promesses indéfinies de l'Iradé du 2 Octobre et du Firman du 12 Décembre ne pourront qu'exalter les aspirations sans les contenter. D'un autre côté, il est à constater que les armes de la Turquie n'ont pas réussi à mettre fin à l'insurrection. L'hiver a suspendu l'action, le printemps la verra renaître. La conviction que, le printemps venu, de nouveaux éléments fortifieront l'action, que la Bulgarie, les Crétois, etc., viendront grossir le mouvement, est générale parmi les Chrétiens. Quoiqu'il en soit, il est à prévoir que les Gouvernements de Serbie et du Monténégro, qui, jusqu'à ce jour déjà, ont eu bien de la peine à se tenir à l'écart du mouvement, seront impuissants à résister au courant, et dès à présent sous l'influence des événements et de l'opinion publique dans leurs pays, ils semblent s'être familiarisés avec l'idée de prendre part à la lutte, à la fonte des neiges.

En présence de cette situation, la tâche des Puissances, qui dans l'intérêt de la paix générale veulent écarter les complications ultérieures, devient bien difficile. L'Autriche-Hongrie et les deux autres Cours Impériales, en suite d'un échange d'idées confidentiel, se sont rencontrées dans la conviction que, si l'on se bornait à attendre l'effet des principes proclamés par le dernier Firman—principes qui d'ailleurs, dans l'intention de

la Porte, ne semblent pas devoir être immédiatement appliqués aux pays soulevés,—on n'obtiendrait d'autre résultat que de voir le conflit prendre une plus grande extension au sortir de l'hiver. Les trois Cabinets pensent donc que l'unique chance d'éviter de nouvelles complications se trouve dans une manifestation émanant des Puissances et constatant leur ferme résolution d'arrêter le mouvement qui menace d'entraîner l'Orient.

Or, ce but ne saurait être atteint par le seul moyen d'une injonction à l'adresse des Gouvernements Princiers et des populations Chrétiennes sujettes du Sultan. Pour que cette action très difficile en elle-même ait une chance de réussite, il importe absolument que les Puissances soient à même d'en appeler à des actes clairs, indiscutables, pratiques, et spécialement propres à améliorer la situation de l'Herzégovine et de la Bosnie; en un mot que leur action puisse s'appuyer sur des faits et non sur des programmes. Ce n'est qu'ainsi que les Cabinets se trouveront en mesure de faire valoir avec vigueur leurs conseils pacifiques.

Il est une autre difficulté—et c'est la plus grande—qu'il faut surmonter à tout prix, si l'on veut pouvoir compter sur un résultat tant soit peu favorable. Cette difficulté, c'est la défiance profondément enracinée que toute promesse de la Porte rencontre auprès des Chrétiens. Une des causes principales de cette méfiance doit être recherchée dans le fait que plus d'une mesure annoncée dans les derniers rescrits du Sultan a déjà été proclamée dans des hattî-chérifs antérieurs sans que le sort des Chrétiens en ait éprouvé une amélioration appréciable.

Aussi les Cabinets croient-ils absolument nécessaire d'obtenir que le Gouvernement du Sultan confirme, au moyen d'une Commission officielle, ses intentions consignées par rapport à l'ensemble de l'Empire dans l'Iradé du 2 Octobre et dans le

Firman du 12 Décembre, et qu'il notifie en même temps aux Puissances son acceptation des points ci-dessus mentionnés, qui ont pour objet spécial la pacification des provinces insurgées.

Sans doute que par ce moyen les Chrétiens n'obtiendraient pas la forme de garantie qu'ils semblent réclamer en ce moment, mais ils trouveraient une sécurité relative dans le fait même que les réformes octroyées seraient reconnues indispensables par les Puissances, et que la Porte aurait pris envers l'Europe l'engagement de les mettre à exécution.

Telle est la ferme conviction sortie d'un échange d'idées préalable entre les Cabinets d'Autriche-Hongrie, de Russie et d'Allemagne.

Votre Excellence est chargée de porter ce point de vue à la connaissance du Cabinet de St. James, et d'obtenir son concours à l'œuvre de paix dont tous nos efforts tendent à assurer le succès.

Si, comme je l'espère, les vues du Gouvernement Anglais se rencontrent avec les nôtres, nous lui proposerions par égard pour la dignité et l'indépendance de la Porte de ne point adresser à celle-ci nos conseils dans une note collective, mais de nous borner à inviter nos Représentants à Constantinople à agir conjointement et d'une manière identique auprès du Gouvernement du Sultan dans le sens que nous venons de développer.

Vous voudrez bien, M. le Comte, donner lecture de la présente dépêche à M. le Ministre des Affaires Etrangères, et lui en laisser copie; et je vous serais reconnaissant de me faire connaître aussitôt que possible l'impression qu'elle aura faite sur son Excellence.

Recevez, etc.

III.

THE BERLIN MEMORANDUM.

May, 1876.

Les nouvelles alarmantes venant de la Turquie sont de nature à engager les Cabinets à resserrer leur entente.

Les trois Cours Impériales se sont crues appelées à se concerter entre elles pour parer aux dangers de la situation, avec le concours des autres grandes Puissances Chrétiennes.

Dans leur pensée, l'état présent des choses en Turquie réclame une double série de mesures. Il leur paraît avant tout urgent que l'Europe avise aux moyens généraux de prévenir le retour d'événements tels que ceux qui viennent d'éclater à Salonique et qui menacent de se reproduire à Smyrne et à Constantinople. A cet effet les Grandes Puissances devraient, à leur avis, se concerter sur les dispositions à prendre pour préserver la sécurité de leurs nationaux et celles des habitants Chrétiens de l'Empire Ottoman, sur tous les points où elle se trouve compromise.

Ce but semblerait pouvoir être atteint par un accord général concernant l'envoi des bâtiments de guerre sur les points menacés, et l'adoption d'instructions combinées aux commandants de ces navires pour les cas où les circonstances exigeraient de leur part une co-operation armée en vue du maintien de l'ordre et de la tranquillité.

Toutefois, ce but ne serait qu'imparfaitement atteint si la cause première de ces agitations n'étaient point écartée

par la prompt pacification de la Bosnie et de l'Herzégovine.

Les Grandes Puissances se sont déjà réunies dans cette pensée sur l'initiative prise dans la dépêche du 30 Décembre dernier, afin d'obtenir une amélioration effective du sort des populations de ces contrées, sans porter atteinte au *status quo* politique.

Elles ont demandé à la Porte un programme de réformes destinées à répondre à ce double but. La Porte, déférant à cette demande, s'est déclarée fermement résolue à mettre ces réformes à exécution et l'a officiellement communiqué aux Cabinets.

Il en est résulté pour ceux-ci un droit moral, celui de veiller à l'accomplissement de cette promesse, et une obligation, celle d'insister pour que les insurgés et les réfugiés secondent cette œuvre d'apaisement, en cessant la lutte et en rentrant dans leurs foyers.

Cependant, ce programme de pacification, bien qu'accepté en principe par toutes les parties, a rencontré un double écueil.

Les insurgés ont déclaré que l'expérience du passé leur défendait de se fier aux promesses de la Porte, à moins d'une garantie matérielle positive de l'Europe.

La Porte a déclaré de son côté qu'aussi longtemps que les insurgés parcouraient le pays en armes, et que les réfugiés ne se repatriaient pas, il lui était matériellement impossible de procéder à la nouvelle organisation du pays.

En attendant les hostilités ont repris leur cours. L'agitation entretenue par cette lutte de huit mois s'est étendue à d'autres parties de la Turquie. Les populations Musulmanes ont dû en conclure que la Porte n'avait déféré qu'en apparence à l'action diplomatique de l'Europe, et qu'au fond elle n'avait pas l'intention d'appliquer sérieusement les réformes promises. De là un

réveil des passions religieuses et politiques, qui a contribué à amener les déplorables événements de Salonique et la surexcitation menaçante qui se manifeste sur d'autres points de l'Europe Ottoman.

Il n'est pas douteux, non plus, qu'à son tour cette explosion du fanatisme réagit sur la situation des esprits en Bosnie et en Herzégovine, comme dans les Principautés voisines.

Car les Chrétiens de ces contrées ont dû être vivement impressionnés par le fait du massacre de Consuls Européens, en plein jour, dans une ville paisible, sous les yeux des autorités impuissantes, alors qu'on les engage à se confier au bon vouloir des Turcs irrités par une lutte longue et acharnée.

Si cette situation se prolongeait, on risquerait ainsi de voir s'allumer l'incendie générale que la médiation des Grandes Puissances avait précisément en vue de conjurer.

Il est donc de toute nécessité d'établir certaines garanties de nature à mettre hors de doute l'application loyale et complète des mesures arrêtées entre les Puissances et la Porte. Plus que jamais il est urgent de peser sur le Gouvernement du Sultan pour se décider à se mettre sérieusement à l'œuvre afin de remplir les engagements contractés par lui envers l'Europe.

Comme premier pas à faire dans cette voie, les trois Cours Impériales proposent d'insister auprès de la Porte, avec toute l'énergie que doit avoir la voix unie des Grandes Puissances, afin de l'amener à une suspension d'armes pour le terme de deux mois.

Ce délai permettrait d'agir à la fois sur les insurgés et les réfugiés, pour leur donner confiance dans la sollicitude vigilante de l'Europe ; sur les Principautés voisines, pour les exhorter à ne pas entraver cette tentative de conciliation ; et enfin sur le Gouvernement Ottoman, pour le mettre en demeure d'accomplir ses promesses. On pourrait ainsi ouvrir la voie à

des pourparlers directs entre la Porte et les délégués Bosniaques et Herzégoviniens, sur la base des vœux que ceux-ci ont formulés, et qui ont été jugés aptes à servir de points de départ à une discussion.

Ces points sont les suivants :—

1. Les matériaux pour la reconstruction des maisons et églises seraient fournis aux réfugiés rentrants, leur subsistance serait assurée jusqu'à ce qu'ils puissent vivre de leur travail.

2. En tant que la distribution des secours relèverait du Commissaire Turc, celui-ci devrait s'entendre sur les mesures à prendre avec la Commission Mixte, mentionnée dans la note du 30 Décembre, afin de garantir l'application sérieuse des réformes et d'en contrôler l'exécution. Cette Commission serait présidée par un Herzégovинien Chrétien, et composée d'indigènes représentant fidèlement les deux religions du pays ; ils seraient élus dès que l'armistice aura suspendu les hostilités.

3. A l'effet d'éviter toute collision, le conseil serait donné à Constantinople de concentrer les troupes Turques, au moins jusqu'à l'apaisement des esprits, sur quelques points à convenir.

4. Les Chrétiens garderaient les armes comme les Musulmans.

5. Les Consuls ou délégués des Puissances exerceront leur surveillance sur l'application des réformes en général et sur les faits relatifs au repatriement en particulier.

Si avec l'appui bienveillant et chaleureux des Grandes Puissances et à la faveur de l'armistice, un arrangement pouvait être conclu sur ces bases, et mis immédiatement en œuvre par la rentrée des réfugiés et l'élection de la Commission Mixte, un pas considérable aurait été fait vers la pacification.

Si, cependant, l'armistice s'écoulait sans que les efforts des Puissances réussissent à atteindre le but qu'elles ont en vue,

les trois Cours Impériales sont d'avis qu'il deviendrait nécessaire d'ajouter à leur action diplomatique la sanction d'une entente, en vue des mesures efficaces qui paraîtraient réclamées dans l'intérêt de la paix générale, pour arrêter le mal et en empêcher le développement.

IV.
LORD DERBY'S DESPATCHES.

THE EARL OF DERBY TO SIR H. ELLIOT.

Foreign Office, December 8, 1875.

Sir,—Her Majesty's Government approve your Excellency's proceedings, as reported in your despatch of the 23rd ultimo, in which you state that you had reminded the Porte that no intelligence had been received of any one having been punished for the massacre at Popovopolie of the Christian refugees who were returning to their homes, and that the Grand Vizier had in consequence telegraphed to the Governor-General of Bosnia to inquire what had been done to secure the punishment of those concerned in that outrage.

I am, etc.,

(Signed) DERBY.

THE EARL OF DERBY TO SIR H. ELLIOT.

Foreign Office, January 25, 1876.

Sir,—I transmit to your Excellency herewith a copy of the answer which I have returned to the despatch from Count Andrassy containing proposals for the pacification of the

insurgent districts in Herzegovina and Bosnia, of which I transmitted a copy to your Excellency in my despatch of the 3rd instant.

Your Excellency will see that, after examining the proposals contained in Count Andrassy's despatch, Her Majesty's Government have come to the conclusion that there is nothing in them to which they cannot give a general support.

On the outbreak of the insurrection, when appealed to by the Porte to use their good offices with the Austro-Hungarian Government, and at Belgrade and Cettigné, Her Majesty's Government expressed their opinion, in my despatch to your Excellency of the 12th August, that the Turkish Government should rely on their own resources to suppress the insurrection, and should deal with it as a local outbreak rather than give international importance to it by appealing for support to other Powers.

Had the advice thus tendered been acted upon by the Porte, and vigorous measures taken at the outset for the restoration of order, it is probable that the insurrection would not have attained its present proportions, nor afforded grounds for proposing a Consular Mission to the disturbed districts.

When such a Mission was proposed, the Grand Vizier addressed to your Excellency a request that the British Consul might be instructed to join the Mission. I thereupon informed your Excellency, in my despatch of the 24th of August, that Her Majesty's Government consented to this step with reluctance, as they doubted the expediency of the intervention of foreign Consuls. Such an intervention, I remarked, was scarcely compatible with the independent authority of the Porte; it offered an inducement to insurrection as a means of appealing to foreign sympathy against Turkish rule, and it might not improbably open the way to further diplomatic interference in the internal affairs of the Empire.

Since, however, the Porte had begged your Excellency not to stand aloof, Her Majesty's Government felt that they had no alternative. They desired, at the same time, that the Turkish Government should understand that the assent of Her Majesty's Government was given at their own instance, and that Her Majesty's Government would have thought it better that the Porte should have dealt with the insurgents without foreign intervention of any kind.

The Mission of the Consuls had no practical results in inducing the insurgents to lay down their arms. What little benefit might have arisen from it was defeated by the ill-advised proceedings of the Turkish troops, as reported in Consul Holmes' despatch of the 28th of September.

The Porte has now again requested Her Majesty's Government not to hold aloof from the concerted action of the Powers. This request must be regarded as a pledge on the part of the Porte that the counsels of the Austro-Hungarian Government, to which the Governments of all the other Powers have adhered, and to which the general support of Her Majesty's Government is extended, will be received in a friendly spirit, and that effect will be given to them in a manner which may tend to the pacification of the disturbed districts by showing that the Porte is really determined to carry into execution its promises of reform.

The proposals of Count Andrassy amount, indeed, to little more than a request that the Porte will execute the Hatti-Scheriff of Guilhané of 1839, the Hatti-Humayoun of 1856, and the Iradé and Firman of the 2nd October and 12th of December last; in short, that the measures for the improvement of the condition of the non-Mussulman and rural population generally throughout the Empire, which have been publicly proclaimed, should be brought into practical application. Some of these measures do not affect the Christian

subjects of the Porte alone, but would benefit the whole population alike. The abolition of tithe-farming, for instance ; which must be felt as an especial relief by the owners of land, who, in Bosnia, at all events, are for the most part Moham-medans.

Her Majesty's Government do not, therefore, consider that the proposals of Count Andrassy conflict with the IXth Article of the Treaty of Paris ; they look on them as being in the nature of suggestions or recommendations for adoption by the Porte in its endeavours to put an end to the insurrection, and as not involving any interference in the relations existing between the Sultan and his subjects, nor in the internal administration of his Empire.

Nor do Her Majesty's Government see that the Porte need feel any difficulty in acting upon the advice thus given, and in communicating to the Powers in some form the measures which may be proposed in consequence. All the different Firmans and Règlements of a similar character have at various times been officially notified to the Powers. The Hatti-Scheriff of Gulhané contains an express clause to this effect :—
“ Les dispositions ci-dessus arrêtées étant une altération et une rénovation complète des anciens usages, ce rescrit Impérial sera publié à Constantinople et dans tous les lieux de notre Empire, et devra être communiqué officiellement à tous les Ambassadeurs des Puissances amies résidants à Constantinople, pour qu'ils soient témoins de l'octroi de ces institutions qui, s'il plaît à Dieu, dureront à jamais.” The Hatti-Humayoun of 1856 was also officially forwarded by the Turkish Government to the Ambassadors, with a statement that the Sublime Porte renewed and confirmed the assurances previously given to the Governments of England and France with regard to the treatment of renegades. The Imperial Firman for the reorganization of the Government of Crete in 1867, and the

Règlement for the administration of the Lebanon in 1864, were also similarly notified.

Your Excellency has suggested in your telegraphic despatch of the 17th instant, that the Porte might issue a supplementary Firman decreeing the fresh reforms now proposed, and Her Majesty's Government see no objection to this course if the other Powers will consider it satisfactory.

In a matter, however, of such importance, and one in which the Porte has so much to gain by securing the support of the Powers, it would not be wise that too great regard should be paid to mere formalities.

What appears to Her Majesty's Government to be essential is that the Porte should act promptly and vigorously in the execution of the reforms. It is evident from the reports of Her Majesty's Consuls that the native Mussulmans in Bosnia and Herzegovina, and even the local authorities, have not realized to themselves the importance of frankly accepting, and honestly executing, the reforms already decreed.

Your Excellency should therefore strongly impress on the Porte that it is indispensable that the officers appointed to execute these reforms should be men of energy and determination who will not be deterred by local apathy or prejudices, who will be able and willing to repress with severity such atrocities as the murders of the returning refugees at Popovopolie (reported by Consul Holmes on the 26th of October), and who will do their utmost to restore a feeling of security to the Christian population. Unless such a feeling can be produced, no effectual pacification of the insurgent districts can reasonably be expected.

In accordance with what I have stated in the inclosed communication to the Austrian Government, your Excellency is authorised to give a general support to the proposals contained in Count Andrassy's despatch, and summed up by him under

five heads, without, however, pledging Her Majesty's Government to the details of those parts of his Excellency's proposals on which Her Majesty's Government have been unable to give a definite opinion.

As Count Andrassy does not propose that a collective note should be addressed to the Porte, your Excellency will confine your representations to the usual form of oral communications to the Grand Vizier or to Raschid Pasha, acting, so far as may be possible, within the limits I have indicated, in concert with your colleagues the Representatives of Austria, France, Germany, Italy, and Russia.

Your Excellency should also take an early opportunity of making the Porte acquainted with the general tenor of this despatch.

I am, etc.,
(Signed) DERBY.

THE EARL OF DERBY TO SIR H. ELLIOT.

Foreign Office, March 16, 1876.

Sir,—Her Majesty's Government approve your Excellency having called the attention of the Porte to the late judicial appointments in Bosnia, as reported in your despatch of the 22nd ultimo, and I have to instruct you to take an opportunity of stating that apathy shown in such matters cannot fail to have disastrous results if allowed to continue.

I am, etc.
(Signed) DERBY.

THE EARL OF DERBY TO LORD ODO RUSSELL.

Foreign Office, May 19, 1876.

My Lord,—Her Majesty's Government have had under their consideration the Memorandum of which a copy was enclosed in your despatch of the 13th instant, containing the proposals of the Governments of Austria, Germany, and Russia for the pacification of the Herzegovina and Bosnia.

These proposals had been agreed upon by Count Andrassy, Prince Bismarck, and Prince Gortchakow at a meeting at Berlin, and your Excellency was requested to communicate them to Her Majesty's Government with the hope that Her Majesty's Government would accede to them and express their opinion at once upon the telegraphic summary furnished by your Excellency.

I informed your Excellency on the 15th instant that it would be necessary for me to consult my colleagues, and that I could not give any reply until after the proposals of the three Governments had been considered by the Cabinet.

I have now to state to your Excellency that Her Majesty's Government regret to find themselves unable to co-operate in the policy which the three Governments have invited them to pursue. Her Majesty's Government appreciate the advantage of concerted action by the Powers in all that relates to the questions arising out of the insurrection, but they cannot consent to join in proposals which they do not conscientiously believe likely to effect the pacification which all the Powers desire to see attained.

The proposals contained in the Memorandum are directed to pressing upon the Porte the establishment of an armistice for two months, with a view to direct negotiations between the Porte and the delegates of the insurgents on the basis

of the wishes which the latter have expressed, and which have been thought fit to serve as points of departure for discussion.

In the first place, it appears to Her Majesty's Government that they would not be justified in insisting upon the Porte consenting to an armistice without knowing whether the military situation admitted of its being established without prejudice to the Turkish Government, and without rendering necessary the exercise of greater efforts on the renewal of the campaign, and a consequent prolongation of the struggle. Moreover, the faithful observance of the armistice by both sides would have to be secured, since the Porte could not well be called upon to suspend operations against the insurgents while the insurrection was receiving support from Servia and Montenegro, and the insurgents strengthening their position and recruiting their forces and obtaining arms and supplies. The mere fact of the insurrection remaining unsuppressed would be likely to give it additional vitality, and the result of an armistice might, therefore, be to lead to a rejection of any demands which the Porte might fairly be expected to concede, and thus hinder rather than advance the prospects of pacification.

At the same time Her Majesty's Government would not advise the Porte against acceding to an armistice should the Turkish Government consider that the political and military position admitted of it, and its result would be likely to be beneficial, although in view of the objections which I have mentioned, and others of a similar character which will readily occur to your excellency, Her Majesty's Government do not feel justified in recommending it to the Porte, still less in insisting upon its acceptance.

In my despatch of the 15th instant I have informed your Excellency of some of the objections which I stated to Count

Münster had occurred to me in regard to the five points which were proposed as a basis for negotiation between the Porte and the insurgents; a further consideration of the proposals has not led to any modification of the opinion I then expressed.

Her Majesty's Government doubt whether the Porte has the means of providing for the reconstruction of the houses and churches of the insurgents or of finding subsistence for the returning refugees. If Her Majesty's Government are rightly informed, the cost would be very heavy, and the Porte has not the requisite funds at its disposal.

The distribution of relief by such a Commission as is contemplated would be little better than a system of indiscriminate almsgiving. It would probably be beyond the power of the Porte to adopt, and if adopted, would prove utterly demoralizing to any country.

Her Majesty's Government do not mean to say that the Porte would not be wise in affording any practicable facilities and inducements for the return of the population who have quitted, or been driven from, their homes owing to the insurrection, but they do not consider that they can urge upon the Porte to undertake engagements the observance of which would be beyond its power.

The concentration of the Turkish troops in certain places would be delivering up the whole country to anarchy, particularly when the insurgents are to retain their arms.

The "Consular supervision" would reduce the authority of the Sultan to nullity; and, without force to support it, supervision would be impossible.

Even if there were any prospect of the Porte being willing and able to come to an arrangement with the insurgents on the basis proposed, which Her Majesty's Government scarcely believe possible, the intimation with which the Memorandum

closes would render any such negotiation almost certainly abortive, for it could not be supposed that the insurgents would accept any terms of pacification from the Porte in face of the declaration that if the insurrection continued after the armistice the Powers would intervene further.

Regarded in this light the proposal of an armistice seems to Her Majesty's Government to be illusory.

There is another point not referred to in your Excellency's telegraphic summary, but to which it is necessary for me to advert, viz., the proposal in the third paragraph of the Memorandum that the Powers should agree upon the measures to be taken by their respective naval forces for the safety of foreigners and of the Christian inhabitants of the Ottoman Empire at Salonica and other places where it might be threatened.

Her Majesty's Government have already desired that Her Majesty's ship 'Swiftsure' should proceed to Salonica, and that Admiral Drummond, with three other vessels of war, should go to Besika Bay, where he will be in ready communication with Her Majesty's Embassy, and an additional vessel of small size has been placed in attendance at Constantinople at Sir H. Elliot's request.

They have heard that other Powers have reinforced their squadrons in Turkish waters, and that there is a considerable naval force assembled at Salonica.

Her Majesty's Government do not doubt that the measures thus taken will have had a good effect in affording confidence to the subjects of Great Britain and other Powers at Salonica and elsewhere; and they will readily give instructions to Admiral Drummond, and the captains of Her Majesty's ships under his orders, to give any protection and assistance which may be necessary for the preservation of the lives and properties of foreign subjects should they unhappily be in

immediate danger, either in concert with the commanding officers of the ships of the other Powers, or, in the absence of any such ships, on their own responsibility. Her Majesty's Government do not, however, at present apprehend any necessity for such measures, and they are of opinion that care should be taken that the naval forces of foreign Powers are not employed in any manner contrary to the Treaty rights of the Porte or subversive of the Sultan's authority.

Your Excellency is authorized to read this despatch to Prince Bismarck, and to leave a copy with his Excellency, should he desire it.

I am, etc.,
(Signed) DERBY

THE EARL OF DERBY TO LORD ODO RUSSELL.

Foreign Office, May 19, 1876.

My Lord,—In the despatch which I have addressed to your Excellency on the 19th instant, I have stated that Her Majesty's Government are unable to give their assent to the proposals which the three Governments desire should be urged upon the Porte, and have mentioned the reasons which have induced Her Majesty's Government to refrain from doing so.

Those proposals take the shape of certain defined points for negotiation between the Porte and the insurgents, coupled with an armistice and an intimation of an intention to take further measures should the negotiations be unsuccessful. None of these proposals had previously been discussed with Her Majesty's Government, or, so far as they are aware, with the other Powers signatories of the Treaty of Paris; and the inconvenience has consequently risen again, as in the case of

Count Andrassy's note, of a set of Articles being submitted for the acceptance of Great Britain without any opportunity having been afforded for a preliminary consideration of their details by Her Majesty's Government, or for the possible objections of Her Majesty's Government to be considered by the three Governments concerned.

Her Majesty's Government attach little importance to forms in matters of this kind, and would have readily accepted the present proposals had they appeared to them to afford a feasible plan for the pacification of the insurgent districts ; but they cannot accept, for the sake of the mere appearance of concert, a scheme in the preparation of which they have not been consulted, and which they do not believe calculated to effect the object with which they are informed it has been framed.

I leave it to your Excellency's discretion how far it may be desirable that you should indicate the views of Her Majesty's Government in this respect in your communications with the German Government.

I am, etc.,
(Signed) DERBY.

THE EARL OF DERBY TO SIR H. ELLIOT.

Foreign Office, May 19, 1876.

Sir,—With reference to my despatch of this day's date, inclosing a copy of the despatch which I have addressed to Lord Odo Russell, containing the answer of Her Majesty's Government to the proposals of the three Powers for the pacification of the Turkish insurgent districts, I have to point out to your Excellency that Her Majesty's Government have,

since the outbreak of the insurrection in Bosnia and the Herzegovina, deprecated the diplomatic intervention of other Powers in the affairs of the Ottoman Empire.

They agreed, at the instance of the Porte, to take part in the Consular Commission established in August last, although they felt little confidence in any good results arising from it. They also, at the request of the Porte, took part in the concert of the Powers in regard to Count Andrassy's note, although with certain reservations. They scarcely suppose that the Porte will again appeal to them to join the other Powers on the present occasion; and, even if the Porte were to do so, they would not be able to comply, since they feel that they could not conscientiously advise the Porte to accept conditions which they cannot recommend as politic or feasible.

On the other hand, Her Majesty's Government do not desire to counsel the Porte to resist any advice or proposals which the Porte may consider to be practicable and advantageous.

They cannot conceal from themselves that the gravity of the situation has arisen, in a great measure, from the weakness and apathy of the Porte in dealing with the insurrection in its earlier stages, and from the want of confidence in Turkish statesmanship and powers of government, shown by the state of financial, military, and administrative collapse into which the country has been allowed to fall. The responsibility of this condition of affairs must rest with the Sultan and his Government, and all that can be done by the Government of Her Majesty is to give such friendly counsel as circumstances may require. They cannot control events to which the neglect of ordinary principles of good government may expose the Turkish Empire.

I am, etc.,

(Signed) DERBY.

THE EARL OF DERBY TO SIR H. ELLIOT.

Foreign Office, June 13, 1876.

Sir,—Her Majesty's Government instructed your Excellency by telegraph, on being informed of the deposition of Sultan Abdul Aziz, to take such steps as might be proper for congratulating Sultan Mourad personally on his accession, and on the 9th instant I forwarded to you the Queen's letter of credence, accrediting you as Her Majesty's Ambassador to His Imperial Majesty.

Her Majesty's Government considered that in the present state of affairs it was desirable that your Excellency should be in a position to enter into the closest official relations with the Sultan and the newly instituted Government without delay, and they have, therefore, not awaited the observance of all the usual formalities on such occasions before authorizing you to present your credentials.

The Sultan and his Ministers cannot but be aware of the serious nature of the present crisis, and of the urgent importance of taking advantage of the opportunity afforded by the change of Government to establish the administration of the country on a sound footing. Above all, it is essential that no time should be lost in executing the reforms in the insurgent Provinces in a real and effectual manner.

In the note to Count Beust of the 25th of January, I pointed out that the reforms suggested by the Powers were all, or nearly all, already provided for by the Firmans of the Porte, or the laws of the Turkish Empire, and in recommending them to the Porte Her Majesty's Government felt that they were but asking the Porte to carry out those principles which it has constantly professed.

At the same time it is undeniable that the liberal and en-

lightened projects of reforms which have from time to time been promulgated at Constantinople, have not been brought into practical operation in the provinces. The spirit of obstruction has been permitted, by the laxity of the Porte, to prevail, and ignorance and corruption have too frequently disgraced the Administration, until the discontent of the Mahomedans as well as Christians has culminated in the overthrow of the late Sultan's throne.

Her Majesty's Government have learnt with much satisfaction that the Turkish Ambassador at Vienna has assured the Austrian Government that the Porte abides by all the engagements for reforms in the disaffected provinces into which the Government of the late Sultan had entered. It is not enough, however, that the Porte should make assurances of its intentions, it should show the force of its intentions by its acts.

The incapable men who, as your Excellency has had too often reason to know, have been placed in positions of authority, should be at once removed and replaced by those who can gain the confidence and the respect of the people. Extortion and corruption should be promptly punished, and the reforms in the administration of justice, and the concession of full civil rights to all the religious communities vigorously proceeded with.

It is only by this means that the Porte can hope to forestall the designs of the enemies of the Ottoman Empire, and to secure for the new Government the confidence which under the rule of the late Sultan had been so disastrously forfeited.

Her Majesty's Government are not ignorant of the difficulty of uprooting abuses of long standing, and effecting a radical reform in the administration of a country like Turkey, but the necessity is imperative, and Her Majesty's Government would not be doing their duty as a friendly and allied Government if they now shrank from urging it.

They feel that they are in a position, from the circumstances of the political situation, in which their counsel should carry with it peculiar weight, and they accordingly desire that your Excellency should avail yourself of the earliest occasion to express these views to the Sultan in courteous and becoming, but explicit, language.

I am, etc.,
(Signed) DERBY.

THE EARL OF DERBY TO LORD A. LOFTUS.

Foreign Office, June 14, 1876.

My Lord,—In the course of a long and interesting conversation which I held with the Russian Ambassador on the 12th instant, he expressed regret at the general distrust which appeared to be felt in England as to the designs of his Government, thinking, as he said, that the character and antecedents of the Emperor were a sufficient guarantee for his pacific intentions.

I assured his Excellency, in reply, that we did not doubt, and never had doubted, the desire of the Emperor for the maintenance of peace; he was well known to be opposed on principle to a warlike policy, which, moreover, would be obviously opposed to the interests of Russia at the present moment; but I reminded his Excellency that the language and conduct of Russian Agents had not always been in accordance with what I could not doubt was the intention of the Government, and that the sympathy generally felt in Russia for the insurgent population of Turkey was a matter of notoriety. These circumstances were in themselves enough to explain any expressions indicative of suspicion or mistrust

that might have appeared in the press, or in public speeches—expressions, I must observe, which had never been used or sanctioned by her Majesty's Government. I was glad, I added, to take the opportunity of acknowledging the importance of the service rendered to European peace by the warning recently addressed by the Emperor to the Prince of Servia, which, according to our latest reports, appeared to have accomplished its object.

In answer to a further inquiry by Count Schouvaloff, I said that it was not a part of the system or policy of England to take up a position of isolation in Eastern matters, as, indeed our conduct during the last few months had shown. Her Majesty's Government had given their support to the note of Count Andrassy, though at no time sanguine of the results to be expected from it; they had dissented from the policy indicated in the Berlin Memorandum for reasons frankly stated by them at the time and which they still held to be valid; it now appeared that action on that document was indefinitely postponed, and, as far as I saw, there was no present cause of difference between Her Majesty's Government and those of other Powers. All were agreed that the new Sultan should be allowed time to consider his policy and to deal with the insurgents by direct negotiation. The success or failure of his overtures to them remained to be seen, and, while that continued uncertain, no further step could well be decided upon.

Count Schouvaloff did not dissent from the above observations, but said it would be desirable to know what was the solution of the difficulty which England desired to see adopted. What was the drift and object of British policy? Until that was known to his Government, united action was impossible, however much other Powers might desire it.

I said in reply that, supposing the negotiations now in progress between the Porte, and the insurgents to end in a

pacification, it was obvious that the object we desired would be effected without our interference, and nothing more need be said or done in the matter. Supposing them to fail—which I did not conceal from him, I thought to be the more probable alternative—I doubted the possibility of effective interposition, unless we were prepared (which Her Majesty's Government were not) to use compulsion as against one or other party in the quarrel. The insurgents appeared to be fighting, not for administrative reforms, but for independence or autonomy in some form; the Porte, on the other hand, was willing to grant reforms more or less extensive, but would certainly not concede autonomy unless compelled: the differences between the views of the two parties seemed irreconcilable, and I did not believe that either would be willing to give way. Nothing, I thought, remained, except to allow the renewal of the struggle, until success should have declared itself more or less decisively on one side or the other; if the Sultan found that his troops could make no head against the insurgents, and that the latter continued to hold their ground, he might and probably would be willing to yield to the pressure of necessity. In that case, the revolted provinces would have acquired for themselves a position similar to that of Servia or Roumania. If, again, the Sultan succeeded in even partially re-establishing his authority, the demands of the insurgents would be moderated, their confidence would have received a check, and they would acquiesce in some such arrangement as that made with the Cretans after the war of 1866-67. In either event, the time would not be distant when the Powers might usefully and successfully mediate; but that time did not appear to me to have arrived as yet.

I am, etc.

(Signed) DERBY.

THE EARL OF DERBY TO SIR A. BUCHANAN.

Foreign Office, June 22, 1876.

Sir,—I have to state to your Excellency that the Austro-Hungarian Ambassador called to-day and said that he was instructed to communicate to me the views of his Government on the present state of the question of the insurgent Turkish provinces.

It would be a mistake, he said, to suppose that the insurgents had no other object in view than the separation of the revolted provinces of Turkey and their independence. A considerable number of insurgents had already returned to their peaceful occupations, and among the refugees the prevailing desire was to return to their homes.

The public press represented that the insurgents would insist on a declaration of independence. The facts were not in accordance with these statements; on the contrary, the present time was more favourable than ever for an attempt at pacification, particularly after the attitude that Her Majesty's Government had assumed, and which had the effect of discouraging any excessive pretensions of the insurgents.

On the other hand, a resolution which would confine the Powers to a passive policy, and which would tend to leave the two parties in conflict, could only serve to give them courage, and to favour the designs of their friends. To admit this point of view would be to recognise indirectly that the independence of the revolted provinces would be the reward of their resistance. It would then follow that Russia, not being able to take up a position more favourably to Turkey than England, would naturally turn all her influence in the Balkan Peninsula away from any attempt of pacification, instead of facilitating it. Without doubt the question would

be raised again at the end of six weeks under circumstances infinitely less favourable to a solution. Of what use then would have been the resistance of Her Majesty's Government to these recent arrangements ?

At the present moment, he continued, a moderate and benevolent policy of the Powers towards Turkey, supposing that the latter paid attention to their wishes, was infinitely easier than it would be at the end of six weeks, when, failing the support of the Powers, it would be made apparent that the Turkish Government had neither succeeded in pacifying the provinces nor in accomplishing the promised reforms.

There would then be new pretexts for meeting the exigencies of the situation by the employment of more radical methods, and the chances of a specific solution would be considerably diminished.

These were the reasons why the six weeks' armistice should not be understood as an admission that during this interval the Powers would remain passive and accept as conclusive the events which might take place during that period. On the contrary, advantage ought to be taken of the interval to facilitate and hasten the attempts at pacification which might proceed from the Porte.

If Her Majesty's Government, he said, would adopt this point of view, there need be no fear for the present of any opposition on the part of Russia, as the Emperor Alexander sincerely desired peace.

If, on the contrary, no advantage were taken of the present moment to make use of the favourable opportunity which it offered, it would be very difficult, in view of a failure on the part of the Porte, to repress the violence of public opinion in Russia, and to escape from the results of the consequent pressure on the part of the Cabinet of St. Petersburg.

Perhaps it might be supposed that the Ottoman Government would come off victor on the renewal of hostilities; it would appear, indeed, that this was the view prevailing at Constantinople, and explained in a great measure the attitude of the Turkish Government. But according to trustworthy reports Turkey had only 40,000 men to put into the field against Servia and Montenegro, whilst Servia alone could dispose of 96,000 men. Thus, any calculations based upon a certain victory for Turkey might very probably turn out erroneous.

In any case it would be not only desirable but necessary to know definitely what were the intentions of the British Government. If its intention were to leave matters alone, the Austrian Government would take its own course, on the firm conviction that, as regards the reciprocal interests of the two countries, there could be no difference of principle, and that in the greater number of cases which might present themselves it would be easy to come to an understanding. If, on the other hand, the British Government would endeavour in concert with Austria to bring about a pacification, the Austrian Government would be better satisfied. Between these two extremes, that is to say, a scheme of pacification energetically carried out and an attitude of absolute non-interference, it would appear that the British Government should make its choice, and it was its own interest no less than that of the Austrian Government that a positive decision should be arrived at in one way or the other with the view to avoid a wavering policy prejudicial to commerce and industry, and inconvenient to the surrounding countries.

His Excellency then adverted to the question of Montenegro, and said that he was informed by Connt Andrassy that the British Ambassador at Vienna had, by order of

Her Majesty's Government, communicated to him an extract of a telegram from Sir H. Elliot, who, it appeared, thought it would be advisable to prevail upon the Prince of Montenegro to follow the example of Servia in sending a Special Envoy to Constantinople to congratulate the Sultan, as in this case the Porte might perhaps be inclined to make concessions to Montenegro.

Count Andrassy, he went on to say, being afraid that Prince Nicholas would look upon this proposition as an attempt to obtain from him an indirect acknowledgment of the Suzerain rights of the Porte, and in view also of the line taken by Servia, did not deem it advisable to act upon this proposal of Her Majesty's Government. He believed, however, that it would be possible to attain the same end by other means, and had therefore sent the following instructions to Count Zichy by telegraph :—

“According to information he had received Servia was preparing for war more actively than ever. The Servian Government had ordered 50,000 Chassepots, to be delivered in ten days, and had also eleven batteries of artillery from Krupp, which were to be delivered as soon as possible, and to be imported through Roumania. It seemed to him that from this it was to be inferred that Servia was preparing for immediate and hostile action in event of her proposals being rejected at Constantinople. He heard from the English Government that it was thought likely to be beneficial at Constantinople if the Prince of Montenegro could be prevailed upon to imitate the example of Servia, and to send an Envoy to congratulate the Sultan. He did not believe that it would be possible to induce the Prince to adopt such a course. On the other hand, however, there was no doubt that the antagonism between Servia and Montenegro was as strong as ever at the present moment. It might therefore be possible

to attain the end Sir H. Elliot had in view by causing a communication to be made by the Grand Vizier to Prince Nicholas to the following effect:—"That the Porte having granted an armistice of six weeks, and being resolved to keep all the promises it had made in favour of the Christians, relied on the Prince exerting his moral influence with the insurgents with a view to effecting the pacification of the insurgent provinces."

At the same time a further communication should be made to the Prince through the Governor of Scutari or some other fit person, conveying a promise from the Porte that if the pacification were effected through Prince Nicholas' agency, his demands and wishes would be attended to, as far as possible, when the question of the limitation of the frontier was again brought forward.

His Excellency concluded by stating that Count Andrassy said that it would be most agreeable to himself, and, he thought, in the interests of England, if Her Majesty's Government would support this proposal at Constantinople.

With reference to the question put to Her Majesty's Government by Count Andrassy, whether Her Majesty's Government intended to move in Eastern affairs or to let them take their course, I stated to Count Beust that Her Majesty's Government have never laid down as a rule for themselves a policy of isolation or of non-interference in these affairs. Her Majesty's Government accepted the propositions contained in Count Andrassy's note of the 30th December last, and would have been prepared to accept also the Memorandum drawn up at Berlin, but for the objections to its substance, which were clearly stated at the time.

Her Majesty's Government, I said, are ready to take part in the work of pacification when they see a chance of doing so with effect. If they now abstain it is only because they

see nothing to be done. When circumstances lead them to alter that opinion, their inaction will cease.

The Government of Austria-Hungary appeared to take a more sanguine view of the prospects of pacification than Her Majesty's Government have been led to do, and I could not but be glad of it, and hope that they were right.

I said that I would let his Excellency know hereafter the opinion which Her Majesty's Government might form with regard to Montenegro.

I am, etc.,
(Signed) DERBY.

THE EARL OF DERBY TO COUNT SCHOUVALOFF.

Foreign Office, June 29, 1876.

M. l'Ambassadeur,—Her Majesty's Government have given their most careful consideration to the despatch from Prince Gortchakow, the contents of which your Excellency was so good as to communicate to me on the 21st instant. They have seen with satisfaction the proofs afforded by this communication of the desire of the Russian Government to act in concert with them, and to enter into friendly and frank explanations upon the questions to which the insurrection in Bosnia and the Herzegovina has given rise.

Her Majesty's Government are most willing to enter into the exchange of sentiments which His Highness invites, and they cordially share his anxiety that there should be a complete agreement among all the Powers as to the policy to be pursued in the present state of affairs in Turkey.

Her Majesty's Government are as much alive as that of

Russia can be to the importance of securing the religious and other liberties of the Christian population of the Ottoman Empire, nor have they failed on all fitting occasions to counsel the Porte to give entire execution to the various measures which have been proclaimed by the Sultan with this object. They have taken the earliest opportunity on the accession of Sultan Mourad to instruct Her Majesty's Ambassador at Constantinople to speak in this sense, and they have especially pressed for the effectual realization, at as early a date as circumstances allow, of the reforms promised to the insurgent provinces.

Her Majesty's Government cannot, however, regard the insurrection in Bosnia and the Herzegovina as being exclusively or principally a struggle directed against local oppression, whether in religious or civil matters. The reports which they have received show that it arose from other causes, and is now fomented and maintained for purposes which are obviously of a general and political rather than of a local and administrative character. In support of this view, I may mention the fact that the Roman Catholic population have not taken part in the movement, and that those Christians who have not joined the insurgent bands have continued throughout the recent troubles to live unmolested.

It also appears that numbers of those who had quitted their villages at the outbreak of the insurrection are ready and willing to return to them, and are deterred from doing so, not by fears of their Mahomedan neighbours, but by the action of the insurgents, who drive away the cattle and destroy the goods of the returning refugees.

It is obvious that, while this state of things is allowed to continue, the efforts of the Powers in recommending schemes for the better administration of these districts must be fruitless. It was in this conviction that I have stated to your

Excellency my opinion that the insurrectionary movement must be suppressed, and order restored, before any such schemes can be advantageously treated.

Her Majesty's Government agree with that of Russia that the best remedies are those which would afford a practical solution of the difficulties to be dealt with, without altering the political and territorial *status quo* of the Ottoman Empire. They do not, however, clearly understand what is the particular plan which the Russian Government have in view. Nor do they think it easy, under any circumstances, for a foreign Government to frame a scheme of administration for a Turkish Province. There are local peculiarities, tendencies, and customs, which must be taken into account, and which only local knowledge can provide for. It is for this reason, among others, that Her Majesty's Government see so much objection to pressing on the Porte at the present moment, and without close and careful inquiry, projects of reform going beyond those already promised. Such projects, if embodied in vague and general terms, are apt to be differently understood by the various parties concerned in promoting them, while the task of working them out in detail is one for which foreign advisers, however able or well-intentioned, can hardly be competent.

Her Majesty's Government will, at the same time, willingly join with those of other Powers in considering and advising such ameliorations in the existing administration of the two Provinces as, on full examination, they may believe to be practicable; and they see with pleasure that Prince Gortchakow expresses his conviction, in which they fully share, of the good intentions which animate the present Sultan.

His Highness, however, thinks it improbable that the Turkish Government could be willing to make any further concessions if the insurrection were once subdued, and seems

to have misinterpreted some remark of mine as expressing an opinion that, in that case, the action of Europe might be necessary to prevent the extermination of the Christians. I am not aware of having used any such phrase, and must therefore explain that Her Majesty's Government have no reason to anticipate that the suppression of the insurrection would be followed by the extermination or persecution of the Christian races. There are no signs of any such intention on the part either of the Porte or the Mahometan population, and Her Majesty's Government do not believe that any apprehension of the kind need be entertained.

I pass to Prince Gortchakow's further suggestion, that the Sultan should cede to Montenegro a port and some adjacent territory, and that, at the same time, Little Zvornik should be handed over to Servia, with the view of offering to those States an inducement to maintain peaceable relations with the Porte.

Her Majesty's Government would readily co-operate in endeavouring to establish more satisfactory relations between Montenegro, Servia, and the Porte.

They have already used their best efforts in this respect with regard to Montenegro, and have learned by telegraph, on the 27th instant, from Sir Henry Elliot, that the Turkish Government have taken a step in this direction. A message has been sent from Constantinople to the Prince of Montenegro, stating that the Sultan has seen, in the absence of opposition to the expedition of the Turkish Commander-in-chief, evidence that the Prince has been exercising a salutary influence, and adding that His Majesty will take this fact into consideration at the proper time. This message, however vague in terms, cannot but be regarded as evidence of an inclination to come to a friendly understanding; and it is for the Prince of Montenegro to consider whether he will not be ready to meet halfway the overtures thus made.

The menacing attitude assumed by Serbia, notwithstanding the recent counsels of the Powers, renders it manifestly inopportune to urge upon the Porte, under present circumstances, the adoption of a similar course towards that Principality.

The Sultan cannot be expected to forget the concessions made to Serbia under the Protocol of the 4th September, 1862, and the evacuation of the fortress of Belgrade and other Servian fortresses under the Firman of the 10th April, 1867. It was with the object of securing friendly relations with Serbia that these large concessions were agreed to by the Porte, and the result of the policy thus adopted does not seem encouraging for the future.

The despatch of Prince Gortchakow was written before the attitude of Serbia had become so decided, and Her Majesty's Government do not doubt that His Highness will concur with them in the view which they take of the present situation.

It may possibly not yet be too late for the Powers, and especially for the Russian Government, whose influence at Belgrade is so apparent, to make a further effort to induce Prince Milan to abandon his policy of aggression. It is desirable that the Servian Government should be warned that if they attempt to secure territorial aggrandisement under the pretext of Slavonic sympathies, they must not expect to be protected from the consequences of failure and defeat.

Her Majesty's Government are convinced that if this were done in a tone which did not admit of misconstruction, and the Turkish insurgent provinces were freed from the instigations to revolution of the foreign Slav Committees and agitators, the work of pacification would be so greatly advanced as to render the completion of it an easy task.

Her Majesty's Government have expressed themselves thus

explicitly in order to meet the wishes of that of Russia for a full statement of their opinions. They observe with pleasure that, in many respects, the two Governments are agreed, and they trust that the effect of frank and unreserved discussion may be to bring about a still closer approximation of their respective views.

I am, etc.,
(Signed) DERBY.

THE EARL OF DERBY TO LORD A. LOFTUS.

Foreign Office, June 30, 1876.

My Lord,—On the 26th instant Count Schouvaloff informed me that he had heard from Prince Gortchakow explaining his meaning in making use of the expression “autonomie vassale et tributaire,” in allusion to the future of the insurgent Provinces.

He considered that autonomy did not mean sovereignty. That the sovereignty of these Provinces should remain with the Sultan intact; and that the eventuality of a Sovereign Prince over Bosnia and Herzegovina was not comprised in his project.

Count Schouvaloff explained that what the Prince desired was simply an administrative autonomy, and he thought that if the Sultan yielded this point the struggle would cease the same day.

I am, etc.,
(Signed) DERBY.

THE EARL OF DERBY TO SIR H. ELLIOT.

Foreign Office, July 13, 1876.

Sir,—With reference to my despatch of the 28th ultimo, I inclose, for your Excellency's information, additional extracts from the "Daily News" of the 8th and 10th instant, reporting the occurrence of further atrocities in Bulgaria and elsewhere, and I have to inform your Excellency that this matter has been again under discussion in both Houses of Parliament.

It is stated that in the district of Philippopolis alone 25,000 innocent lives have been taken, whilst by others the number is fixed at about 12,000.

It is reported that upwards of sixty villages have been pillaged and burnt, and the inhabitants reduced to beggary and starvation. Large numbers of Bulgarian girls and children are said to have been sold publicly as slaves at Philippopolis and elsewhere, and numbers of Bulgarians to have been undergoing torture in prison.

In one instance, where the fugitives fled for protection to a convent near Novo Selo, 40 girls were seized, violated, and subsequently burnt alive in a straw-loft.

Similar atrocities are reported to have occurred at Gabrova and other places with the connivance, in many instances, of the Turkish authorities.

I have to instruct your Excellency to report to me how far reliance is to be placed in these statements.

Your Excellency has already on different occasions remonstrated with the Porte against the employment of Circassians and Bashi-Bazouks, to whom many acts of cruelty have been ascribed, and Her Majesty's Government desire that you should, whenever you have reason to believe it necessary,

urgently impress upon the Porte to see that its irregular forces are kept from committing atrocities which discredit the Ottoman cause.

Her Majesty's Government trust that the reports which have been circulated, and to which I have referred in this despatch, will prove to be unfounded. In a conflict such as is now taking place in European Turkey it is unhappily almost inevitable that acts of unnecessary violence and bloodshed should at times occur, and should give rise to reprisals on the other side. But the Porte will not deny that it is the duty of a civilized Government to use its utmost endeavours for the repression of such barbarities on the part of its own forces. The emergency of the moment, or the nature of the country, may render the employment of irregular troops a matter of necessity; but, unless these are kept under proper control, it is probable that the indignation which will be roused throughout Europe by the accounts of cruelties and outrages, and the sympathy felt for the inhabitants of the oppressed districts, may go far to counterbalance any material successes which the use of such undisciplined levies may secure.

Her Majesty's Government feel, therefore, that they are acting in the interests of Turkey herself, no less than in those of humanity, in warning the Porte against the toleration of acts committed by its troops which would arouse the reprobation of the civilized world.

I am, etc.,

(Signed) DERBY.

THE EARL OF DERBY TO SIR H. ELLIOT.

Foreign Office, July 14, 1876.

Sir,—I have to instruct your Excellency to bring M. Dupuis' Reports, which are inclosed in your despatch of the 6th instant to the knowledge of the Porte.

You will at the same time urge strongly that directions be given to the local authorities to lose no time in repressing these outrages and punishing those concerned in them; that a proclamation be issued, prohibiting under severe penalties the sale of women and children; that the immediate release be effected of all persons who are held in illegal captivity by Circassians or other parties, and that the local authorities take charge of such released captives, when requisite.

I am, etc.

(Signed) DERBY.

THE EARL OF DERBY TO SIR H. ELLIOT.

Foreign Office, August 8, 1876.

Sir,—The accounts of the atrocities committed in Bulgaria continue to give rise to discussion, and are exciting much reprobation, and I have to instruct your Excellency to make further representations to the Porte on this subject. You cannot speak too strongly of the horror which the statements received have aroused in the Government and people of this country.

I have also to instruct your Excellency to report when the insurrection in Bulgaria was suppressed; whether disturbances are still going on; whether any outrages continue to be committed; if not, when they ceased, and whether there is any fear of their being renewed.

I am, etc.

(Signed) DERBY.

THE EARL OF DERBY TO SIR HENRY ELLIOT.

Foreign Office, Sept. 21, 1876.

Sir,—Her Majesty's Government received on the 14th inst. your despatch No. 964 of the 5th inst., enclosing copy of Mr. Baring's Report of his inquiries into the outrages recently committed on the Christian population of Bulgaria.

Her Majesty's Government were prepared by the preliminary Reports from Mr. Baring forwarded by your Excellency to hear that the crimes perpetrated by the Turkish Bashi-Bazouks and the Circassians had been of the gravest character, and they regret to find from the present complete Report that these apprehensions are confirmed to the fullest extent.

Although some of these stories which have been published have proved to be unfounded, there can be no doubt that the conduct of the Vali of Adrianople, in ordering the general arming of the Mussulmans, led to the assemblage of bands of murderers and robbers, who, under the pretext of suppressing insurrection, were guilty of crimes which Mr. Baring justly describes as the most heinous that have stained the history of the present century.

Moreover, it is conclusively shown that not only was the most culpable apathy displayed by the great majority of the Provincial authorities in allowing or conniving at such excesses, but that little or nothing effectual has been done in the way of reparation. While 1,956 Bulgarians were arrested for complicity in an insurrectionary movement which was at no time of a dangerous character, only a score or so of the murderers of unarmed men, women, and children have been punished.

It would indeed appear that the authority of the Porte has been set at defiance and the Turkish Government at Constan-

tinople kept in ignorance of the truth. Under no other circumstances can Her Majesty's Government suppose it possible that the Porte could have been led to promote and decorate officials whose acts have been at once a disgrace and an injury to the Turkish Empire.

The massacre at Batak is reported to have taken place on the 9th of May last, but on the 21st of July it still appears to have been unknown to or overlooked by the Porte, nor were the circumstances brought to light until discovered by Mr. Baring. By his statement it appears that 80 women and girls were taken to Mussulman villages, of which he gives the names, and that they still remain there; that the bodies of the murdered victims were still, at the time of his visit, lying unburied; and that nothing had been done to discover or punish the perpetrators of these crimes.

It is unnecessary for me to refer in detail to the several passages in Mr. Baring's Report which show how effectually fanaticism and rapine have done their work on the population of this unhappy Province.

Even now no serious effort has been made to redress the injuries of the people and to provide effectually for their future safety. The cattle that have been carried off and the goods that have been plundered have not been restored; the houses and churches are left in ruins; the people are starving; industry and agriculture are suspended; and those Christian villages which have hitherto escaped feel no security that their turn may not come.

Acts of violence, as the Mudir at Avrat-Alan acknowledged, still continue and the Porte is powerless or supine.

I have already informed your Excellency of the just indignation which the statements published of these atrocities have aroused in the people of Great Britain; nor can I doubt that a similar feeling prevails throughout Europe.

The Porte cannot afford to contend with the public opinion of other countries, nor can it suppose that the Government of Great Britain or any of the Signatory Powers of the Treaty of Paris can show indifference to the sufferings of the Bulgarian peasantry under this outbreak of vindictive cruelty. No political considerations would justify the toleration of such acts ; and one of the foremost conditions for the settlement of the questions now pending must be that ample reparation shall be afforded to the sufferers and their future security guaranteed.

In order that the views of Her Majesty's Government may be impressed in the most effective manner upon the Sovereign who has recently been called to the Ottoman Throne, Her Majesty's Government desire that your Excellency will demand a personal audience of the Sultan, and communicate to His Majesty in substance the result of Mr. Baring's inquiries, mentioning by name Shefket Pasha, Hafiz Pasha, Tossoun Bey, Achmet Aga, and the other officials whose conduct he has denounced.

Your Excellency will, in the name of the Queen and Her Majesty's Government, call for reparation and justice, and urge that the rebuilding of the houses and churches should be begun at once and necessary assistance given for the restoration of the woollen and other industries, as well as provision made for the relief of those who have been reduced to poverty ; and, above all, you will point out that it is a matter of absolute necessity that the 80 women should be found and restored to their families.

Your Excellency will likewise urge that striking examples should be made on the spot of those who have connived at or taken part in the atrocities. The persons who have been decorated or promoted under a false impression of their conduct should be tried and degraded, where this has not been done

already, and every effort made to restore public confidence. With this view, it would seem advisable, as a provisional measure, and without prejudice to such future arrangements as may be made in concert with the Powers, that the disturbed districts should be at once placed under an able and energetic Commissioner, specially appointed for the purpose, who, if not himself a Christian, should have Christian counsellors in whom trust could be reposed by the Christian population.

Your Excellency should also speak in the strongest terms of the neglect of the local authorities, and of the inadequacy of the inquiry made by Edib Effendi, upon whose Report, officially communicated to the Powers, it now seems that no reliance can be placed.

In order that your Excellency's representations may be well understood, you will furnish the Grand Vizier, at the conclusion of the audience, with a memorandum of the observations which, by the Queen's commands, you have been thus instructed to address to His Majesty the Sultan.

I am, etc.,

(Signed) DERBY.

THE EARL OF DERBY TO LORD AUGUSTUS LOFTUS.

Foreign Office, Oct. 30, 1876.

My Lord,—The time has arrived when it may be useful that I should place on consecutive record the various efforts which Her Majesty's Government have made for the preservation of peace in Eastern Europe, so that the position taken up by them during the recent negotiations may be accurately defined.

Her Majesty's Government, having reason to believe that the good offices of the Powers would be acceptable to Servia and Montenegro, informed Mr. White, Her Majesty's Agent and Consul-General at Belgrade, on the 14th of August, that though they would not propose mediation unless it were asked for, he might suggest to Prince Milan that an application from him to the Powers for their good offices would be favourably received by England.

On the 24th of August a telegraphic despatch was received from Mr. White, reporting that Prince Milan, in the presence of his Foreign Minister, had asked the Representatives of the six Powers to transmit to their Government his application for re-establishing peace between the Porte and Servia, and for a prompt cessation of hostilities with that view. His Highness added that it would be desirable to include Montenegro in the pacification.

Her Majesty's Government expressed their satisfaction at receiving this announcement, and lost no time in communicating it to the other Powers. They also instructed Sir H. Elliot to point out to the Porte the extreme importance of not losing this opportunity of restoring peace; since, if hostilities continued, the interference of some of the Powers seemed probable, and the consequences might be fatal to the Turkish Empire.

Some delay arose before the Prince of Montenegro's formal adhesion to the Servian request for good offices was received, and the assent of the Powers could be procured. This having been done, in order to obviate any question as to the mode of proceeding (the Austrian Government having objected to a collective Note), Her Majesty's Government took the initiative on the 1st of September by instructing Sir H. Elliot to propose at once to the Turkish Government an armistice of not less than a month's duration, with a view to

the immediate discussion of terms of peace,—the armistice to include all combatants.

The other foreign representatives at Constantinople supported Her Majesty's Ambassador in making these proposals. The Porte, however, objected to an armistice, notwithstanding the strong representations which Sir H. Elliot was directed to adress to them.

On the 14th of September, the Turkish Memorandum in answer to the proposals of mediation was received. It stated the conditions of peace expected by the Porte from Servia, as follows :—

“ 1. La personne investie de la dignité de Prince de Serbie devra venir dans la capitale pour rendre hommage à Sa Majesté.

“ 2. Les quatre forteresses dont la garde seulement avait été confiée par le Firman de 1283 au Prince de Serbie, et dont la possession *ab antiquo* était demeurée au Gouvernement Impérial, seront réoccupées par l'armée Impériale comme par la passé; et sur ce point on se conformera strictement aux dispositions du Protocole du 8 Septembre, 1862.

“ 3. Les milices seront abolies. Le nombre des forces nécessaires pour maintenir l'ordre dans l'intérieur de la Principauté ne dépassera pas 10,000 hommes avec deux batteries d'artillerie.

“ 4. Ainsi qu'il est stipulé dans le Firman de 1249, la Serbie sera tenue de renvoyer dans leurs foyers les habitants des provinces limitrophes qui y émigreraient, et, excepté les forteresses qui existent en Serbie *ab antiquo*, toutes fortifications postérieurement établies devront être complètement démolies.

“ 5. Si la Serbie ne se trouve pas à même d'acquitter l'indemnité dont le montant sera déterminé, le tribut actuel de la Principauté sera augmenté de l'intérêt de la somme représentative de l'indemnité.

“6. Le Gouvernement Ottoman aura le droit de faire construire et exploiter par ses agents, ou par une Compagnie Ottomane, à son choix, la ligne qui devra relier Belgrade au chemin de fer aboutissant à Nisch.”

The Memorandum added, however, that the Imperial Government submitted these conditions entirely to the judgment and equitable consideration of the mediating Powers. With regard to Montenegro, the Porte held to the *status quo*. As soon as the Powers had expressed their judgment on the conditions, the Porte would give orders to suspend hostilities within 24 hours, and resume friendly relations with the two Principalities.

A message was at the same time delivered to the Dragomans of the Embassies to the effect that without waiting for the opinions of the Powers, the order for the cessation of hostilities would be sent that night or the next morning. The demand of the Powers being thus practically complied with, it was hoped that they would induce the two Princes to give corresponding orders.

Her Majesty's Government expressed satisfaction on the receipt of this intelligence, and instructions were sent to Mr. White to press the Servian Government, if necessary, to give similar orders. It was stated, however, that in so doing Her Majesty's Government must not be understood as acquiescing in the terms of peace proposed by the Porte, some of which they considered to be quite inadmissible.

On the 17th of September Sir A. Buchanan reported that the Porte had notified in writing a suspension of hostilities until the 25th.

On the 18th, Sir H. Elliot was instructed to inform the Porte that Her Majesty's Government accepted the suspension of hostilities as equivalent to an armistice, in the

confidence that it would be further extended in case of necessity, and that they had reason to believe from the language held by the Russian Ambassador that his Government would take the same view.

In the meanwhile Her Majesty's Government, finding that the Porte objected to an armistice, but were prepared to negotiate terms of peace, had been in communication with the other Powers respecting the provisions which might properly form the basis of pacification, and which I had, in the first instance, communicated to the Russian Ambassador. They were—

The *status quo*, speaking roughly, both as regards Servia and Montenegro.

Administrative reforms in the nature of local autonomy for Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Guarantees of a similar kind against mal-administration in Bulgaria. The exact details of these might be discussed later.

And it was added that any modification of the Treaty of Paris unfavourable to Servia, the resumption of the right of Turkey to garrison Servian fortresses, or the deposition of Prince Milan, would be regarded as inadmissible.

The Austrian Government having objected in the first instance, to the idea of autonomy as applied to the insurgent provinces, it was explained that by the phrase "local or administrative autonomy," as applied to Bosnia and Herzegovina, nothing more was intended by Her Majesty's Government than a system of local institutions which should give the population some control over their own local affairs, and guarantees against the exercise of arbitrary authority. There was no question of the creation of a tributary State.

Upon receiving this explanation the Austrian Government declared themselves prepared to give, in principle, their

complete consent to the proposals, expressing at the same time their desire that it should be formally recorded that the reforms already required from and accepted by the Porte in the Andrassy Note should form the basis of the "local autonomy."

The other Powers, while they were unanimous in rejecting the proposals of the Porte, also declared themselves willing to join in recommending the basis proposed by Her Majesty's Government.

Sir H. Elliot was, therefore, instructed on the 21st of September to state formally to the Porte that the following were the provisions which seemed to Her Majesty's Government proper to form the basis of pacification:—

1. The *status quo*, speaking roughly, both as regards Servia and Montenegro.

2. That the Porte should simultaneously undertake, in a Protocol to be signed at Constantinople with the representatives of the mediating Powers, to grant to Bosnia and Herzegovina a system of local or administrative autonomy, by which is to be understood a system of local institutions which shall give the population some control over their own local affairs, and guarantees against the exercise of arbitrary authority. There is to be no question of the creation of a tributary State.

Guarantees of a similar kind to be also provided against mal-administration in Bulgaria. The exact details of these might be discussed later.

His Excellency was instructed to add that the reforms already agreed to by the Porte in the Note addressed to the representatives of the Powers on the 13th February last would be expected to be included in the administrative arrangements for Bosnia and the Herzegovina, and, so far as they might be applicable, for Bulgaria.

He was further to state that as the continuance of hostilities, while the conditions of peace were in consideration between the Powers and the Porte, would be obviously inexpedient, an early arrangement should be made for the conclusion of a formal armistice.

After conferring with his colleagues, Sir H. Elliot fulfilled the instructions given to him, and communicated on the 25th of September the conditions of peace proposed by Her Majesty's Government, which were supported a few days later by the representatives of the other Powers, including Russia.

On the 24th of September, Sir H. Elliot reported that the Porte had not yet consented to a formal armistice, but was willing to prolong the suspension of hostilities until the 2nd of October.

Prince Milan, however, rejected the proposal, professing himself ready to conclude a regular armistice, but not an arrangement like the one hitherto in operation, which he considered ill-defined.

Her Majesty's Government, in reply, expressed their surprise that Servia, after having asked for the mediation of the Powers, should have thought fit, without further consultation, to refuse the prolonged suspension of hostilities offered by Turkey; and this at a time when endeavours were making to obtain for her more favourable terms of peace than the issue of the campaign gave her a right to expect. They thought it proper to add that any attempt on the part of the Servian commanders to renew active operations would throw on Servia the responsibility of the consequences, and forfeit the support of England. Hostilities were, nevertheless, resumed, and in explaining the action of Russia in the matter, Count Schouvaloff told me that, though his Government had advised the Servian Government not

to renew hostilities, yet that they could not press the matter, as they had from the first required the conclusion of a regular armistice.

It had, in the meantime, become evident that the Turkish Government entertained strong objections, both to the signature of a Protocol promising reforms in the Insurgent Provinces, by which, they said, the *prestige* and authority of the Porte in all parts of the Empire would be impaired, and to the expression of "local autonomy" as applied to those reforms.

On the 26th of September, Count Schouvaloff communicated to me proposals from the Russian Government that, in the event of the terms of peace being refused by the Porte, Bosnia should be occupied by an Austrian and Bulgaria by a Russian force, and the united fleets of the Powers should enter the Bosphorus. The Russian Government stated themselves, however, to be willing to abandon the proposal of occupation if the naval demonstration was considered sufficient by Her Majesty's Government.

General Sumarokoff arrived in Vienna at the same time with a similar proposal.

On the 3rd of October, a suggestion was made in conversation with Count Schouvaloff that, in case of an unfavourable reply from the Porte to the proposals then before it, the Powers should fall back upon their original demand for an armistice.

Count Schouvaloff said that he would telegraph this suggestion at once to Livadia, and on the following day his Excellency called and read to me a telegram from Prince Gortchakoff which he had received, although he was not certain that it was in answer to his message. Prince Gortchakoff's telegram was to the following effect :—

"A regular suspension of hostilities of sufficient length not

having been established, and the negotiations for peace having encountered unexpected difficulties at Constantinople, the contest has been renewed in the valley of the Morava.

“The Imperial Government could not be indifferent to the bloodshed thus caused, and the Emperor proposed to the Guaranteeing Powers that it should be arrested by immediately imposing an armistice or truce of six weeks on both parties, so as to give the mediating Governments time to consider the means of definitely arranging the pending questions.”

I had no difficulty in submitting this proposal to my colleagues, and informed Count Schouvaloff that Her Majesty's Government had decided to give their support to the proposal of an armistice of not less than a month as the next step to be taken in the event of the rejection by Turkey of the proposed terms for a basis of peace. They had, I said, on the other hand, been unable to concur in the measures of occupation and the entry of the united fleets into the Bosphorus, which had been previously suggested by Prince Gortchakoff.

Sir Henry Elliot was accordingly instructed, on the 5th, in the event of the terms of peace which had been proposed by the Powers being refused, to press upon the Porte as an alternative to grant an armistice of not less than a month, and to state that, on the conclusion of an armistice, it was proposed that a Conference should immediately follow. He was further to intimate that, in case of the refusal of an armistice, he was instructed to leave Constantinople, as it would then be evident that all further exertions on the part of Her Majesty's Government to save the Porte from ruin would have become useless.

Her Majesty's Government, at the same time, informed the Governments of the other Powers of this proposal of an armistice, and the opinion of Her Majesty's Government that the armistice should be followed by a Conference.

The plan of renewing the demand for an armistice received unanimous support, but the suggestion of a Conference gave rise to some objections and inquiries. The Austrian Government, in a despatch, the substance of which was communicated to me by Count Beust on the 9th of October, while stating their desire not to thwart the action of England, requested information on the following points :—

1. Whether the Porte is to take part in the Conference.
2. Where the Conference is to meet.
3. If the Conference is to be composed of the Foreign Ministers of the respective countries or of Plenipotentiaries.
4. What is to be the programme of the Conference.

They stated that it would depend upon the information derived from the answers to these questions whether they could waive the objections they entertained to the idea. Until then they were of opinion that a Commission at Constantinople, such as had previously been suggested, would be a preferable plan, and would more profitably employ the time allowed by the armistice.

As Count Beust did not ask for an immediate reply to the above queries, I told his Excellency that I must reserve my opinion on the first point—namely, whether or no the Porte should be represented in the Conference. It would be necessary to ascertain the views of other Powers, which were still unknown to me.

As to the second question, I must equally reserve a final expression of opinion; but, personally, I was inclined to think that Constantinople would be on various accounts the most convenient place of meeting.

As to the third, I considered that the personal attendance of the various Foreign Ministers at a Conference whose sittings might last some time, would be in many respects unadvisable.

As to the fourth, I agreed in the view, which I understood to be that of Count Andrassy, that a Conference without a basis was not likely to lead to good results; and I thought that a programme, more or less definite, ought to be agreed upon before it met; but the terms of such programme would require care in framing, and I could only say that it should be submitted to the Powers in due course.

On the other hand, it appeared that the Russian Government were likely to stipulate for the exclusion of the Turkish Representative from at least the first portion of the deliberations of the Conference—a step which seemed to make it undesirable that Constantinople should be the place of meeting.

In a despatch addressed to your Excellency on the 11th of October, I reverted to the subject of the influx of Russian Volunteers into Servia which had already formed the subject of conversation between Count Schouvaloff and myself. I pointed out the embarrassment caused to the Roumanian Government by the passage of these Volunteers through their territory, and stated that Her Majesty's Government considered that the Government of Prince Charles had some right to complain that their conscientious efforts to remain neutral were thus thwarted. I went on to say that the Government of Great Britain would be the last to suggest the repression of sympathy with a popular cause as long as it did not exceed the limits prescribed by International Law, but that the presence of Russian officers and soldiers in the Servian army had assumed proportions little short of national assistance.

If the Emperor of Russia was as sincerely desirous of a speedy and peaceful termination of the war as Her Majesty's Government believed him to be, he could scarcely

be insensible to the difficulties thus thrown in the way of a settlement.

The assistance so openly given to Servia must tend to excite irritation and suspicion in the minds of the Turkish Ministers, and at the same time to raise the hopes of the Servian Government and render them less inclined to listen to reasonable terms. Beyond this there was the danger, that the presence of so large a foreign element in the Servian army might lead to a spirit of insubordination and constitute its commanders into military chiefs, independent and impatient of the control of Prince Milan's Government.

These considerations Her Majesty's Government wished to press on the serious attention of the Emperor and his advisers, and you were instructed to take an opportunity of expressing yourself to the Russian Government in this sense.

On the 12th of October the Turkish Government communicated to the Representatives of the mediating Powers at Constantinople a Note, in which they stated that, taking note of the proposal of the Powers for the re-establishment of peace with Servia and Montenegro, on the basis of the *status quo ante*, and while declaring themselves ready to submit to the decision of the Powers on the conditions they had themselves proposed, they were ready to consent to the conclusion of a regular armistice. They considered, however, that it should extend to six months, from the 1st of October to the 31st of March. They requested, at the same time, that the Powers should name delegates to arrange the terms of the armistice on the spot, and stated that they were ready at once to give the necessary instructions to their troops, and that then the delegates would have to come to an understanding with the commanders of the contending armies on the details of the armistice, and with respect to the necessity of not

permitting the Servians to re-occupy the positions now in the possession of the Imperial troops. The Porte further hoped that the Powers would take measures to put a stop to the introduction of arms and munitions of war into the Principalities, as well as to the influx of Volunteers, and felt confident that the Powers, while impressing on the Principalities the necessity of scrupulously observing the obligations imposed by the armistice, would be able to prevent all attempts on their part to encourage, directly or indirectly, the insurrectionary movements in the neighbouring Provinces, or to furnish aid to the insurgents.

On the same day a general scheme of reform was promulgated for the whole Ottoman Empire, the substance of which was communicated to me on the 13th by the Turkish Ambassador. These reforms consisted in the establishment of a Senate and of a Representative Assembly to vote the Budget and taxes, a revision of the system of taxation, the re-organization of the Provincial administration, the full execution of the law of the vilayets, with a large extension of the right of election, and other measures of reform, including the practical measures which had been desired to be introduced into Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Immediately on learning by telegraph from Sir H. Elliot the intention of the Porte to grant a six months' armistice, I pressed upon Count Schouvaloff and Count Beust the importance of their Governments inducing Servia to accept the armistice. I also urged this through Her Majesty's Embassies at Paris, Berlin, St. Petersburg, and Rome, and sent instructions in the same sense to Belgrade and Montenegro.

The Russian Ambassador expressed his doubts whether the armistice would be accepted at Livadia. I thought it right to warn his Excellency that, however strong might be the feeling of national indignation against Turkish cruelties, it would be

superseded by a very different sentiment if it were once believed by the English nation that Constantinople was threatened. I said that, rightly or wrongly, the conclusion to which every one here would come would be that the rejection by Russia of the Turkish proposal indicated a fixed purpose of going to war; and I entreated him to omit no effort to make his Government understand the light in which this resolution would be viewed by the English people.

On the 12th I learnt from Lord Lyons that the French Government would send immediately instructions to the French Agent at Belgrade to urge the Servians to accept the armistice, and on the 13th the Austrian Ambassador informed me that his Government accepted the proposal of a six months' armistice, would do all in their power to procure its acceptance by other States, and would use their best efforts in that sense both at Belgrade and with the Prince of Montenegro. They still declared, however, that they could not determine their course as to a Conference without knowing the programme. They considered the exclusion of a Turkish Representative contrary to the Treaty of Paris, and they hoped that the questions of the armistice and Conference might be kept separate, and the armistice agreed to without being complicated by considerations as to future negotiations.

On the 12th the Russian Chargé d'Affaires at Constantinople had expressed himself against a long armistice, and when reminded by Sir H. Elliot that his Government had asked a short time previously for one of three months, replied that circumstances had changed, and he did not believe that his Government would be satisfied with the present proposal; and on the 16th Count Schouvaloff communicated to me the telegram from Prince Gortchakoff dated Livadia, October 14, of which the following is a translation:—

“We do not think an armistice of six months necessary or

favourable to the conclusion of a durable peace, which we desire. We cannot exercise pressure on Servia or Montenegro to make them consent to the uncertainty of their difficult situation being so prolonged. Lastly, we consider that the financial and commercial position of all Europe, already intolerable, would suffer still more from this delay. We must insist (*devons insister*) on an armistice of a month or six weeks, the original proposal of England, subject to its being prolonged if the progress of the negotiations shows it to be necessary."

I told Count Schouvaloff that I had received this communication with regret, and pointed out to him that the proposal of Her Majesty's Government was for an armistice of not less than a month; no objection being taken on our part to a longer term.

The Italian Government likewise demurred to the proposal for a long armistice.

Under these circumstances Her Majesty's Government thought it right to make an appeal to that of Germany, which had hitherto remained uncommitted to either view. I accordingly requested the German Ambassador to lay the matter before the Cabinet of Berlin, and to inquire whether they saw an opportunity of exerting their influence to procure the acceptance of some compromise which might avert the danger, now to all appearance imminent, of an open rupture between Turkey and Russia.

On the 19th inst. his Excellency communicated to me Prince Bismarck's reply, which was to the effect that, although an armistice of six months appeared to the German Government acceptable, and they would have wished Russia to accept it, they did not think that, taking into account the position they had held till then, they would be justified in exercising a pressure on the resolutions of other

Powers. Prince Bismarck suggested, however, that perhaps an armistice of six weeks might offer some chance of a solution.

In this state of things, as it was evident that any efforts to bring about the acceptance of the Turkish proposal of a six months' armistice by Servia and Montenegro were checked by the attitude of Russia, Her Majesty's Government felt that further efforts on their part were useless. I therefore informed the Russian Ambassador that, having accepted the Turkish proposal for a six months' armistice, Her Majesty's Government were not prepared to withdraw their acceptance or to make any new proposition. I stated, however, that Her Majesty's Government would offer no objection to a shorter term if the Porte were willing to consent to it, but that they would not press the Porte to do so.

I have since learnt from Sir Henry Elliot that the Porte has informed the Russian Government that they agree to an armistice of six weeks, on condition that if the negotiations are not ended by that time, it should be renewed for a similar term, and again for two months if the second period passed without result.

In the foregoing summary of the negotiations I have indicated the successive steps which Her Majesty's Government have taken to secure an agreement among the Powers. Upon the application of Servia for their good offices, they first obtained the support of all the Powers to a proposal to the Porte of an armistice of not less than a month, and on the Porte advancing terms of peace as a counter-proposal, Her Majesty's Government submitted to Russia in the first instance, and then to the other Powers, provisions which might, in their opinion, form the basis of pacification, and which likewise secured the concurrence of the Powers.

When subsequently difficulty occurred in obtaining the acceptance of these provisions by the Porte, Her Majesty's Government, again in concert with Russia, recommended that the proposal of an armistice should be reverted to, and pressed it upon the Porte in the strongest manner of which diplomatic action will admit, at the same time suggesting a Conference—a suggestion which, from what had previously passed, Her Majesty's Government had reason to suppose would also prove acceptable to the Russian Government. If obstacles have been interposed which have frustrated the intentions of Her Majesty's Government, they have not been occasioned by any failure on their part to meet objections in a conciliatory spirit. The object which has been sought throughout has been to arrive at a speedy and durable pacification.

Her Majesty's Government have felt that the continuance of the present war, which was commenced in defiance of the public remonstrances of Russia and the Powers, is all the more lamentable from being unnecessary, since there are no avowed ends to be attained by it which could not be better and more surely arrived at by peaceable discussion. It has long been evident that, so far as the improvement of the condition of the disturbed districts of Turkey and of the non-Mussulman population generally throughout the Empire is concerned, the unaided action of Servia and Montenegro could have no practical effect, and that from the time when the question passed into the hands of the mediating Powers further bloodshed served only to add to the distress and misery of the population.

Her Majesty's Government have done all that has been in their power to procure the cessation of hostilities and the re-establishment of peace, for which Servia and Montenegro appealed to their good offices. They believed that this would

be accomplished by a prolonged Armistice, and supported that proposal accordingly, feeling convinced that such an Armistice meant peace; nor could they regard the period as unreasonable, inasmuch as the discussions which took place in 1861 with regard to the constitution of the Lebanon occupied from the 22nd of January to the 9th of June. They regret that other counsels have prevailed, and that the uncertainty of the situation has thus been continued, with the commercial and agricultural distress which must ensue from it in Servia and Montenegro and the adjacent districts. They are unable to see how the constantly impending possibility of war can be otherwise than ruinous to all the countries concerned, and would hail with satisfaction any proposal which might bring such a state of things to an end.

They cannot, however, consider that it lies with them to advance any fresh propositions; and, while most anxious to co-operate with the other Powers in any measures of pacification in which the Powers may concur, must refrain from pledging themselves to anything which may impede their liberty of action hereafter should the rights and interests of this country be affected.

Your Excellency will read this despatch to Prince Gortchakoff, and give his Excellency a copy of it, stating at the same time that Her Majesty's Government feel assured that he will find in it a convincing proof of the earnest desire which they have shown to act in concert with the Russian Government, and to maintain in all respects the good relations subsisting between Great Britain and Russia.

I am, etc.,

(Signed) DERBY.
